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THE NEW YORKER

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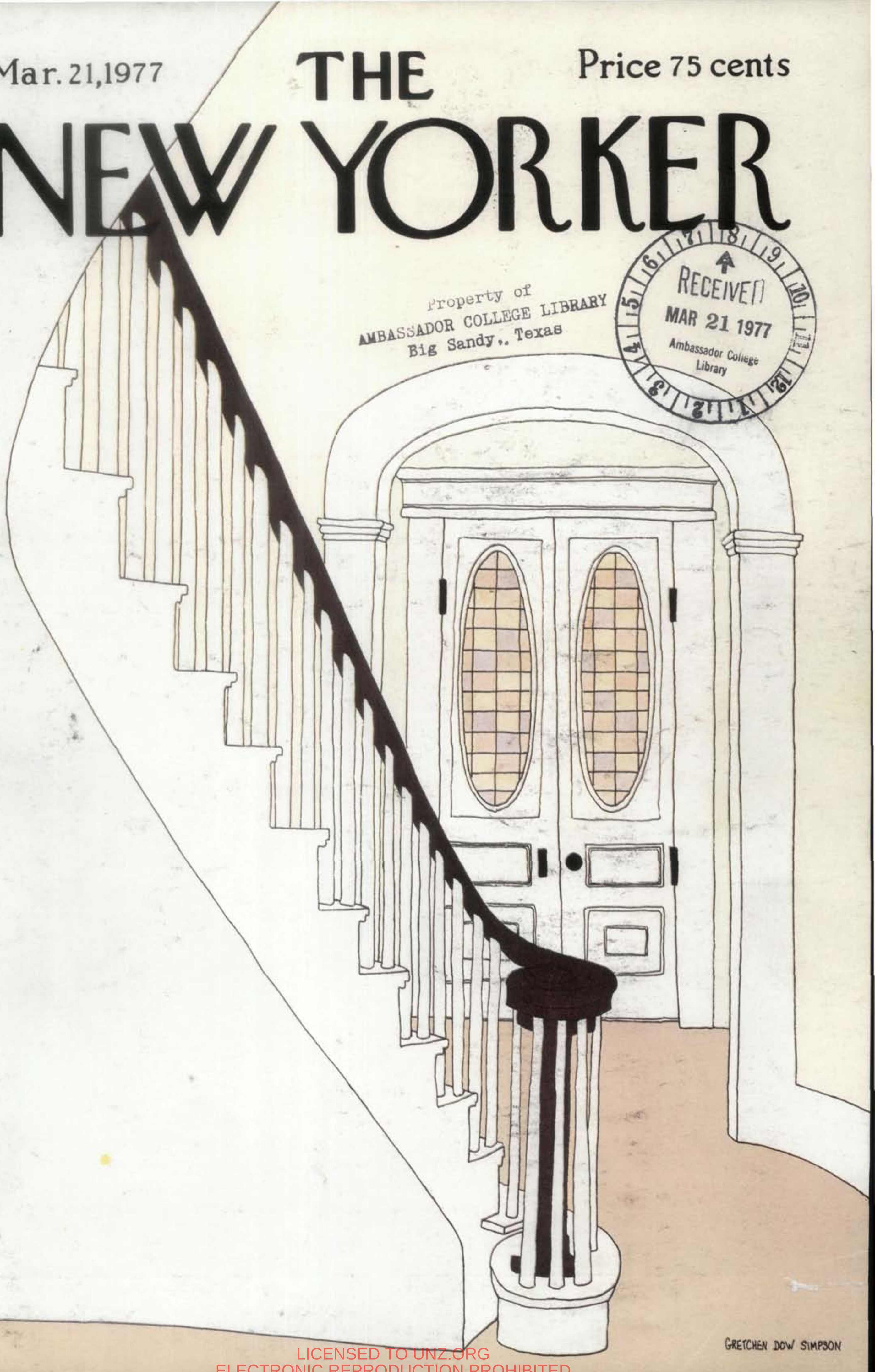

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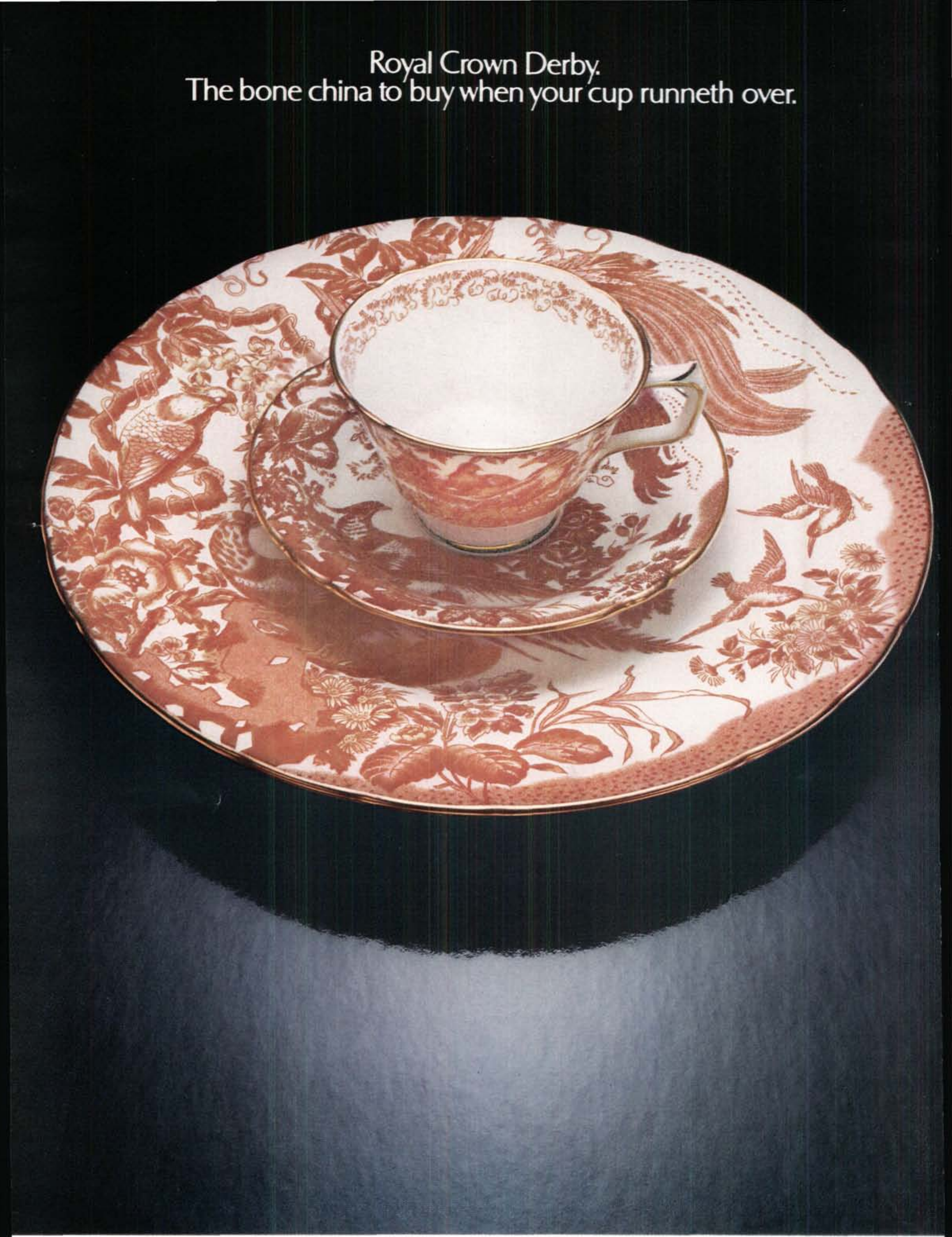
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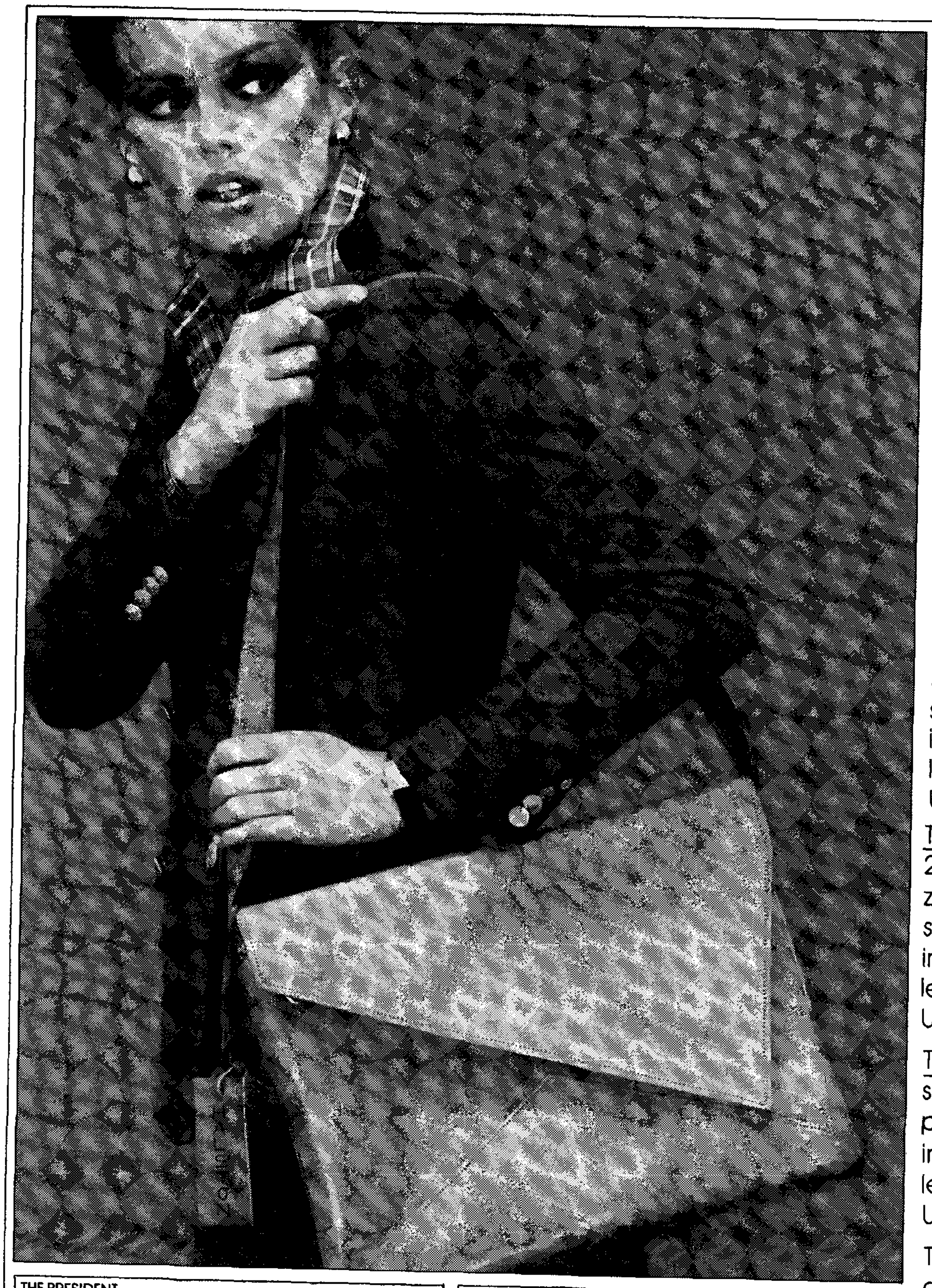

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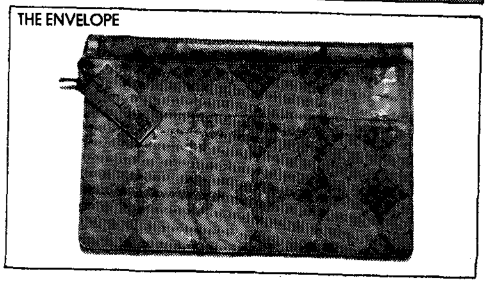

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

American Buffalo—A failed comedy by David Mamet. Kenneth McMillan, John Savage, and Robert Duvall work very hard but in vain. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 246-0390. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Ashes—This British import by David Rudkin tells of the unsuccessful efforts of a most engaging young couple first to conceive a child and later to adopt one—a sad situation, indeed, but an exhilarating play, for Mr. Rudkin is a true dramatist, who writes with feeling, wit, and style. The performances of Brian Murray and Roberta Maxwell as the husband and wife, and of John Tillinger and Penelope Allen as an assortment of other characters, are as close to perfection as makes no matter. Lynne Meadow is the excellent director. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 677-6350. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Cherry Orchard—Chekhov's great comedy is worthily enacted by an exceptional cast; the ravishing settings and costumes are by Santo Loquasto, and the sometimes arbitrary and self-important direction is by Andrei Serban. Not to be missed. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 787-8080. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2.)

The Club—Eve Merriam's musical entertainment is set in a gentlemen's club in 1903, but the company consists of seven women, lightly disguised in top hats, white tie, and tails, who sing and dance to authentic, indelicate songs of the period. As feminist projects go, this one is unusually good-humored, and the performance—the singing, and especially the dancing—under Tommy Tune's direction is proficient and exhilarating. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Comedians—An English playwright, Trevor Griffiths, tells a sad and funny story about some working-class men who are hoping to become professional standup comics. The odds, we see, are strongly against them. Milo O'Shea and Jonathan Pryce head an excellent cast, and Mike Nichols has directed with his usual acuteness and suavity. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 246-4636. Nightly, except Sundays and Tuesdays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Dirty Linen—An inconsequent jape by Tom Stoppard; the scene is the Houses of Parliament, and the subject is the sexual misconduct of a hundred and nineteen M.P.s. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 246-6742. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Equity Library Theatre—A revival of the musical **wonderful town** (Joseph Fields, Jerome Chodorov, Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden, and Adolph Green) is the sixth in this season's series of eight productions. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, March 27. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Fiddler on the Roof—Zero Mostel back in his original role as Tevye, quarrelling cheerfully with God and a vexing wife and many daughters. Jerome Robbins' choreography is as notable as ever. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 245-4878. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The Gathering—A play by Edna O'Brien, with Maria Tucci. Directed by Austin Pendleton. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 321 E. 73rd St. 472-0600. Wednesdays through Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, March 27.)

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Gemini—A play by Albert Innaurato. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S., at Sheridan Sq. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Jules Feiffer's Hold Me!—A revue—entertaining more often than not—adapted from comic strips that Mr. Feiffer has drawn and written over the past twenty years. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Mark Twain Tonight!—A two-week return engagement (new program) of Hal Holbrook's impersonation of the Missouri humorist at seventy. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. CO 5-2314. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Closes Saturday, March 26.)

Monsters—Two one-acters. William Dews' "Side Show" is a harsh Grand Guignol comedy about a pair of Siamese twins, cleverly played by Robert Drivas and Richard De Fabees. Albert Innaurato's "The Transfiguration of Benno Blimpie" is about a hugely fat boy and, later, man who is "eating himself to death" to the bafflement and disgust of his unloving family. James Coco gives the performance of his career in the title role, and Rosemary De Angelis is wonderful, too, as Benno's sharp-tongued, embittered mother. The play, while not for the squeamish, is both funny and tragic. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St., near Astor Pl. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Nightclub Cantata—The remarkable young composer Elizabeth Swados has set poems and passages of prose by a number of writers, among them herself, to her own arresting, dramatic music. Her selections are, for the most part, strong and theatrical; and they are variously sung, spoken, and enacted by a good company of four men and four women, among them herself. Miss Swados also directed. The accompaniment—Judith Fleisher (piano), William Milhizer (percussion), and Miss S. (guitar)—is first-rate. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 5:30 and Sundays at 3.)

Oh! Calcutta!—A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164. Mondays through Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30;

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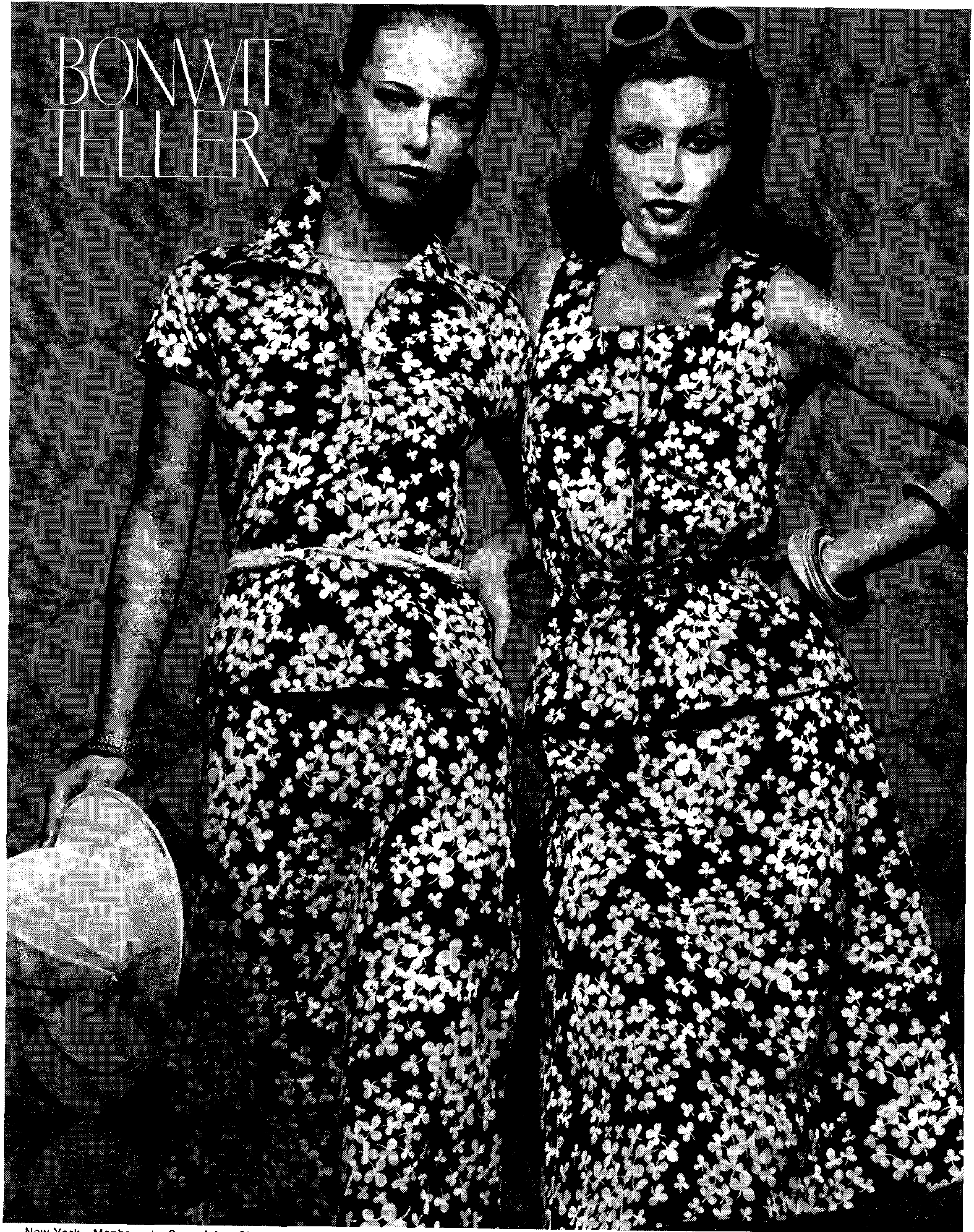

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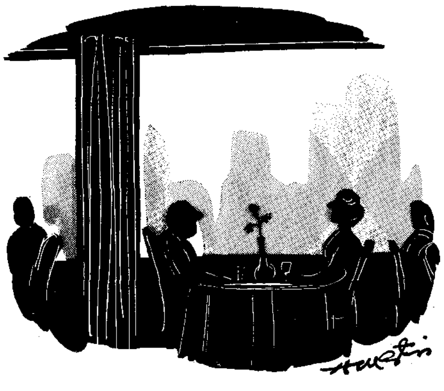
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



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and Sundays at 7. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Otherwise Engaged—Tom Courtenay and a first-rate company in a comedy by the English playwright Simon Gray. The hero is a publisher who prefers to have as few feelings as possible; this proves harder than he has had reason to hope. Directed by Harold Pinter. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 246-9156. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

A Party with Betty Comden and Adolph Green—Two delightful performers, who handle their wonderful material all the more ably because it is from their own hands. (Morosco, 217 W. 45th St. 246-6230. Moves on Monday, March 21, to the Little Theatre, 240 W. 44th St., 221-6425. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Peg o' My Heart—A creditable revival of the delightful comedy that J. Hartley Manners wrote for Laurette Taylor in 1912. Sofia Landon does well as Irish Peg, and Jim Ricketts is very funny and stylish as her *nouveau* poor English cousin. Miguel Romero designed the impressive setting. (Lion Theatre Company, 422 W. 42nd St. 947-4224. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2.)

Perdido—A play by Soledad. (Henry Street Settlement's New Federal Theatre, 466 Grand St. Thursday through Sunday at 7:30. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, March 20. Free.)

Romeo and Juliet—Paul Rudd and Pamela Payton-Wright in Shakespeare's tragedy, directed by Theodore Mann. Previews Wednesday, March 16. Opens officially on Thursday, March 17. (Circle in the Square, Broadway at 50th St. 581-0720. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:45. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Sly Fox—George C. Scott, Jack Gilford, Bob Dishy, Hector Elizondo, and John Heffernan, all in rip-roaring, farcical high spirits. The author is Larry Gelbart, standing on the shoulders of rare Ben Jonson. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 247-0472. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Your Arms Too Short to Box with God—Rousing song and dance, inspired by the New Testament and turned into frisky show biz by Vinnette Carroll. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. JU 2-3897. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Wednesday, March 23, at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**Bubbling Brown Sugar:** Harlem in the twenties, when it was part of the nightclub merry-go-round. A scrapbook of great songs and lively dancing by a cast both old and young. (ANTA Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-6270. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2:30.) . . . **California Suite:** Four sketches about the occupants (at different times) of Suite 203 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Tammy Grimes, Kenneth Haigh, Jack Weston, and Marge Redmond are all excellent, and Neil Simon is as witty as ever. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursdays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Chicago:** Purportedly about some tough folk in the Windy City in the twenties. A musical that defies even the great Bob Fosse to make it merry. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-4271. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A Chorus Line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. A brilliant, innovative musical, conceived, choreographed, and directed by Michael Bennett. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 246-5990. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **Equus:** Peter Shaffer's continuously exciting melodrama about a boy who mutilates six horses in the very act of worshipping them. With Anthony Perkins and Ralph Seymour, directed by John Dexter. (Helen Hayes, 210 W. 46th St. 246-6380. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **The Fantasticks:** 7,033 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide:** The marvellous poems and prose of an American writer, Ntozake Shange, are spoken and danced to by seven remarkably gifted young black women. The director, Oz Scott, must be given high credit for the captivating result. Choreography by Paula Moss. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 246-5969. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Godspell:** A musical adaptation of the Book of Matthew, and once a numbing prologue is over, it becomes a joyful celebration of theatre itself. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 265-1855. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5:30.) . . . **Grease:** A musical that parodies, by faithful imitation, the songs and dances of the nineteen-fifties. The young cast performs capably and with spirit. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 245-5760. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **The Magic Show:** A wretched musical, but the magic tricks make up for it all. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 489-6392. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **Pippin:** A great big gorgeous show, built upon a tiny and trivial book. The chief miracle worker is the director and choreographer, Bob Fosse. With Northern J. Calloway, Michael Rupert, Eric Berry, and Antonia Ellis. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursday, March 24, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Same Time, Next Year:** A comedy as neatly put together as a Cartier watch and with scarcely more heart. Sandy Dennis and Don Murray are the cast. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 245-3430. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursday, March 24, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Sexual Perversity in Chicago** and **Duck Variations:** David Mamet's pair of truly funny comedies, each of them with an undercurrent of sadness. The first deals with the fragile affair between a couple of innocents, the second with the desultory, meandering conversation of two old Jewish men pottering around a park bench. Albert Takazauckas directed the capable cast. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **Shenandoah:** A musical about the Civil War, but really about show biz. With William Chapman. (Alvin, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Streamers:** This play, set in an Army barracks in Virginia in 1965, completes David Rabe's trilogy on the Vietnam war. Though not quite up to Mr. Rabe's "Pavlo Hummel," on the same theme, it is very strong. The production, under Mike Nichols' direction, is excellent, with especially good performances by Peter Evans and Terry Alexander. There is considerable onstage bloodshed. (Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 787-8080. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **Vanities:** In three acts, three Southern high-school girl cheerleaders change from all but identical "best friends" (1963) into quite different and incompatible New Yorkers (1974), in this amusing and gently ironic comedy by Jack Heifner. Garland Wright directed the attractive performance. (Downstairs at the Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **The Wiz:** A black musical version of that well-remembered movie "The Wizard of Oz." The stars of the occasion are Tom H. John, who did the sets, and Geoffrey Holder, who did the costumes and also directed the show. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 246-0730. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

DANCE

Rudolf Nureyev—With Vivi Flindt, Johnny Eliasen, and Anne Marie Vessel of the Royal Danish Ballet, in the final performances of a three-week engagement. The program: "Pierrot Lunaire," "Songs of a Wayfarer," and "The Lesson." (Uris, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Saturday at 2 and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, March 20.)

Eliot Feld Ballet—Final performances of the engagement—Wednesday evening, March 16: "Waves," "The Gods Amused," "Cortège Parisien," and "Intermezzo." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, March 17: "Harbinger;" "Tzaddik;" "Variations on 'America'," with Mikhail Baryshnikov; and "A Soldier's Tale." . . . ¶ Friday evening, March 18: "The Real McCoy;" "The Gods Amused;" "Variations on 'America'," with Mikhail Baryshnikov; and "A Footstep of Air." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, March 19: "The Real McCoy," "Excursions," "Cortège Parisien," and "A Soldier's Tale." . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, March 20: "Waves," "A Footstep of Air," and "Harbinger." . . . ¶ Sunday evening, March 20: "A Footstep of Air," "A Soldier's Tale," and "The Consort." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Evenings at 8. Matinée at 2:30.)

Maurice Béjart's Ballet of the Twentieth Century—Opening performances of a two-week engagement that will run through Sunday, April 3—Tuesday evening, March 22: "Golestan," "Isadora," "Marimba," and "Ce Que l'Amour Me Dit." . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, March 23: "Le Marteau sans Maitre," "Isadora," "Song of a Wayfarer," and "Bolero." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, March 24: "Golestan," "Pli Selon Pli," and "Ce Que l'Amour Me Dit." . . . ¶ Friday evening, March 25: "Le Marteau sans Maitre," "Isadora," "Rhapsodie Espagnol," and "Bolero." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, March 26: "Le Marteau sans Maitre," "Ah! Vous Dirai-Je, Maman?," "Song of a Wayfarer," and "Bolero." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, March 26: "Golestan," "Ah! Vous Dirai-Je, Maman?," "Leitmotiv," and "Ce Que l'Amour Me Dit." (Uris, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Evenings at 8; opening-night curtain at 7. Matinées at 2.)

Dance Umbrella—Final performances of a four-week season: **Merce Cunningham and Dance Company.** (Barnard College Gymnasium, Broadway at 117th St. Wednesday through Sunday, March 16-20, at 8. For information about tickets—all seating is in bleachers—call 691-3500.)

Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company—A troupe of forty-five musicians, singers, and dancers. (Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Thursday through Saturday, March 24-26, at 8, and Sunday, March 27, at 1 and 5:30.)

Trisha Brown Dance Company—Final performances of "Line Up," a full-length avant-garde work. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Friday and Saturday, March 18-19, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.)

•

Hellman's Angels (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Wednesdays from nine-fifteen to midnight.)—**Daphne Hellman**, salon-keeper,

Charles Suppon
is super!
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brightest blue, $60,
atop spanking white
Bermuda shorts, $36
—for all the
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famous New York beauty, aviarist, and extraordinary harpist, invented H.'s A.s almost twenty years ago. It is a unique trio (harp, guitar, bass), it has been up and down the country and over a good part of the world, and its repertory embraces Fats Waller, Scarlatti, Scott Joplin, the "Tennessee Waltz," Charlie Parker, Bach, "Ballin' the Jack," Ray Charles, "St. Louis Blues," and Couperin. The heart of the group is the guitarist **EDDIE BERG.** He summons up a modernized Charlie Christian, but the rest is his own. His solos, rococo-free, think. They are full of open spaces, new notes, and fresh and often noble phrases. His tone is lambent, and he swings constantly. **LISLE ATKINSON** is on bass. He is a formidable technician, and he is not—rarity of rarities—using an amplifier. As a result, his wizard solos have a soft, polite succinctness that has been almost completely missing from the bass since it became an electronic superstar four or five years ago. Hellman's Angels is in the bar at the Gate, and it also appears on Sunday evenings at Daly's Dandelion, a chophouse at Third Avenue and 61st Street.

●

ALI'S ALLEY, 77 Greene St., between Spring and Broome Sts. (226-9042)—This simple, spare SoHo loft of a night club looks like—and is—a ma-and-pa operation. Coltrane alumnus and all-out drummer **RASHIED ALI** and his wife designed just about everything in the place and did all the work in putting it together, from hanging the Japanese paper lampshades to constructing the hexahedral bandstand. The music, however, is not homespun; many of the best contemporary post-hard-bop, new-music, and new-jazz musicians are booked into these sympathetic quarters. Drummer **PHILLY JOE JONES,** who is best known for his work in the fifties with Miles Davis, leads a quartet through Saturday, March 19, and on Tuesday, March 22, Ali himself will move onto the bandstand with his quintet. On Mondays, tenor saxophonist **FRANK FOSTER** presides over the Loud Minority, a *very* loose, spirited, head-turning musical monolith (twenty-two free-lance musicians, some young and promising, others older and fulfilled). Music from about ten. Dinner. Closed Sundays.

BALLROOM, 458 West Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. (473-9367)—A cabaret that, with its white walls, white slatted-back chairs, white formica tables, and pale-blue ceiling, is as light and airy as a breakfast room. Currently, Leonard Sillman is presenting a troupe of players who do numbers from his old "New Faces" shows. Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, at eight-thirty and ten-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dinner.

BAR NONE, 167 E. 33rd St. (684-3223)—Sort of thirties chophouse. The pianist **DARDANELLE** is on hand from seven until midnight, Tuesdays through Saturdays. Her playing is genteel Tatum, but her singing is pure, effortless, and delightful.

BEEFSTEAK CHARLIE'S, 55 Fifth Ave., at 12th St. (675-4720)—Situated amid the high-rise dorms of New York University, the pleasantly relaxed cocktail lounge of this restaurant lures in fine musicians and a healthy number of customers—many of them students. Pianist Hugh Lawson performs through Saturday, March 19; and on Wednesday, March 23, Errol Parker will begin looking after the keyboard. Sundays are devoted to traditional jazz. Music from nine until two Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner.

BOOMER'S, 340 Bleecker St., at Christopher St. (243-0245)—Saxophonist George Adams' quartet is on the bandstand through Saturday, March 19; Monday and Tuesday, March 21-22, will be given over to pianist John Hicks and a quartet; and on Wednesday, March 23, drummer Idris Muhammed will arrive with his quintet. Music from nine-thirty.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Here's the lineup: **JOHN MC LAUGHLIN,** who now plays acoustic guitar and improvisational Indian music, leads his group, Shakti, on Wednesday, March 16; Friday through Sunday, March 18-20, two young jazz-rock players, drummer Lenny White and guitarist Pat Martino, will trade sets with their respective combos; on Monday and Tuesday, March 21-22, Robin Williamson, formerly with the Incredible String Band, will drop by with his new band; on Wednesday and Thursday, March 23-24, David La Flamme, who used to be a lead singer with It's a Beautiful Day, will be on hand; and on Saturday, March 26, Pure Prairie League, a sextet, will begin performing two nights' worth of country rock. Sundays through Thursdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and midnight. Dinner. Closed Thursday, March 17.

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BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Exemplary pianists and their bassists are usually sequestered here, performing duets that are barely—if at all—amplified, in often hectic, buzzing surroundings. **DAVE MC KENNA** plays solo piano through Saturday, March 19; on Monday, March 21, **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** a fine bop sideman and composer and Ella's accompanist for years, will move in with his bassist. On Sundays, pianist **BARRY HARRIS** takes a turn. Music from ten most nights; from nine-thirty on Sundays. Dinner.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (RH 4-1600)—**GEORGE SHEARING** is one of the most gifted of all modern pianists. His harmonic sense is limitless, and he gets off breathtaking pianistic feats without dropping a stitch. **VICTOR GASKIN** is with him, on bass. They play in the Café Carlyle Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-forty-five and eleven-forty-five. Dinner and supper. . . . **MARIAN MC PARTLAND** is back in the Bemelmans Bar, where she can be heard from nine to one nightly, except Sundays.

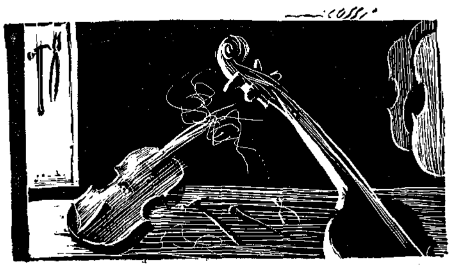
C.B.G.B. & O.M.F.U.G., 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Local, primitive rock bands on the bandstand; local, primitive rock-band entourages in the audience—an interesting jumble of T-shirts, sneakers, rear-guard platform shoes, jeans, feathered boas, slicked-down hair, leather, and a wholesome flannel shirt or two. Beginning Wednesday, March 23, ten bands from Boston will take on New York audiences. Music from about nine-thirty. Monday is showcase night.

CHUNG KUO YUAN, 1115 Third Ave., at 65th St. (371-9090)—**HUGH SHANNON** has settled in the Aquarium Lounge here, singing in his special straight-ahead Billie Holiday way, pulling song after song out of his private thin air. He works Wednesdays through Sundays from nine to two.

CLEO, 1 Lincoln Plaza, Broadway at 63rd St. (724-6301)—**MABEL MERCER** does the vocals, Jimmy Lyon does the accompanying. Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight.

COOKERY, 21 University Pl., at 8th St. (OR 4-4450)—**JOE TURNER** has come back for an extended stay, and he's treating his young and old admirers to "Honey Hush," "Cherry Red," "An Hour in Your Garden," and "Shake, Rattle, and Roll," to name a few. With him again are pianist **LLOYD GLENN,** the where-have-you-been-all-my-life blues and boogie-woogie wonder, and rhythm guitarist **WAYNE WRIGHT.** From eight to one. Blues pianist **SAMMY PRICE** plays on Sundays. Dining.

EDDIE CONDON'S, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—The audiences are largely characterized by coats and ties and cigars, and they come here (and to Jimmy Ryan's, just thirty paces west) to hear traditional small-band jazz. The house band, which begins after nine-thirty, is a low-keyed and controlled sextet headed by bassist Red Balaban. On Tuesday, March 22, Carrie Smith will sing along with the regulars. On Sunday, March 20, trumpeter **HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON** and a quintet will perform from eight. Dinner.



GREGORY'S, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—The resident swing threesome—pianist **BROOKS KERR,** drummer **SONNY GREER,** and clarinettist-saxophonist **RUSSELL PROCOPE**—is here Wednesdays through Sundays. Mondays and Tuesdays, pianist **AL HAIG** works with guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE** and bassist Jamil Nasser. Music from ten to three. On Sunday, March 20, vibraharpist **WARREN CHIASSON,** pianist **JIMMY ROWLES,** and bassist Earl May will join forces from five-thirty to nine-thirty. Mondays through Saturdays, Gene Roland, Loumell Morgan, and Morris Edwards hold sessions from six to nine-thirty.

HOPPER'S, 452 Sixth Ave., at 11th St. (260-0250)—**JOE WILLIAMS,** whose best work ("Every Day," "The Comeback," et al.) materialized during his six stunning bluesy years as vocalist with Count Basie's fifties' band, may sing too much middle-of-the-road music nowadays, but he remains a rather special and exciting performer. Mondays through Thursdays, at nine-thirty and eleven, and three times on Fridays and Saturdays, at nine-thirty, eleven, and twelve-thirty. No music Sundays.

JIMMY RYAN'S, 154 W. 54th St. (CO 5-9505)—**ROY ELDRIDGE** upholds tradition on West 54th Street, aided by the resident blowers—pianist Johnny Morris, drummer Eddie Locke, clarinettist Joe Muranyi, bassist Ted Sturgis, and trombonist Bobby Pratt. On Mondays, Max Kaminsky leads the group. Music weeknights from nine-thirty to three. On Sundays, Kaminsky directs another group of musical archivists from eight until two.

LARSON'S 1160 Third Ave., at 68th St. (744-2540)—**ELLIS LARKINS,** now with a bassist (**BILLY POPP**) and a drummer (**JACK MC ALLISTER**), is rising to new heights—his arpeggios sparkle, his chords are buoyant, his touch is as a butterfly. Tuesdays through Saturdays, from ten to two. Dinner.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Gil Wiest, the proprietor here, continues with a feast of singers, who, for the last month and a half, have been saluting Alec Wilder's "American Popular Song" by performing a great many of the good songs discussed in its pages. **MARY MAYO** and **JOHNNY HARTMAN** share the honors Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine-fifteen to one. On Mondays, from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen comes and goes, talking of Lorenzo Tio. Dinner and supper. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—An often crowded upper West Side jazz-and-soul café. Conga whiz and leader **RAY BARRETTO** is here with his orchestra through Saturday, March 19. Music from ten to three. Dinner.

OTHER END, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—Bonnie Koloc, a folksinger from the Midwest, performs with her backup band through Saturday, March 19. On Wednesday, March 23, guitarist **JIMMY PONDER** and his group will begin alternating with Otis Blackwell, a rough-hewn singer and a Memphis R. & B. legend—he wrote "Don't Be Cruel," "Great Balls of Fire," "Fever," and others—and his quintet. Shows most nights at nine and eleven-thirty; on Fridays and Saturdays at nine and midnight. Snacks.

RAINBOW ROOM, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-9090)—**SY OLIVER** has returned to take over the helm of an orchestra that plays for listening, dancing, or just gawking out the windows. Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one, Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two, and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining and dancing.

RENO SWEENEY, 126 W. 13th St. (691-0900)—Singer Karon Bihari is onstage through Saturday, March 19; and on Tuesday, March 22, Cissy Houston, who has been a backup singer for Aretha Franklin for some time, will begin sharing the bill with Tony Bird, a folkie from southern Africa. Shows at nine and midnight. Dining. **BLOSSOM DEARIE** presents concert-style sets Thursdays through Saturdays, from five-thirty to seven, in which she plays piano and sings "I'm Hip," "Peel Me a Grape," and "The Pro Musica Antiqua" in a small, fragile, and very direct voice.

STORYVILLE, 41 E. 58th St. (755-1640)—A dark but somehow cheerful big square sprawling room that, with its heavy, distressed-

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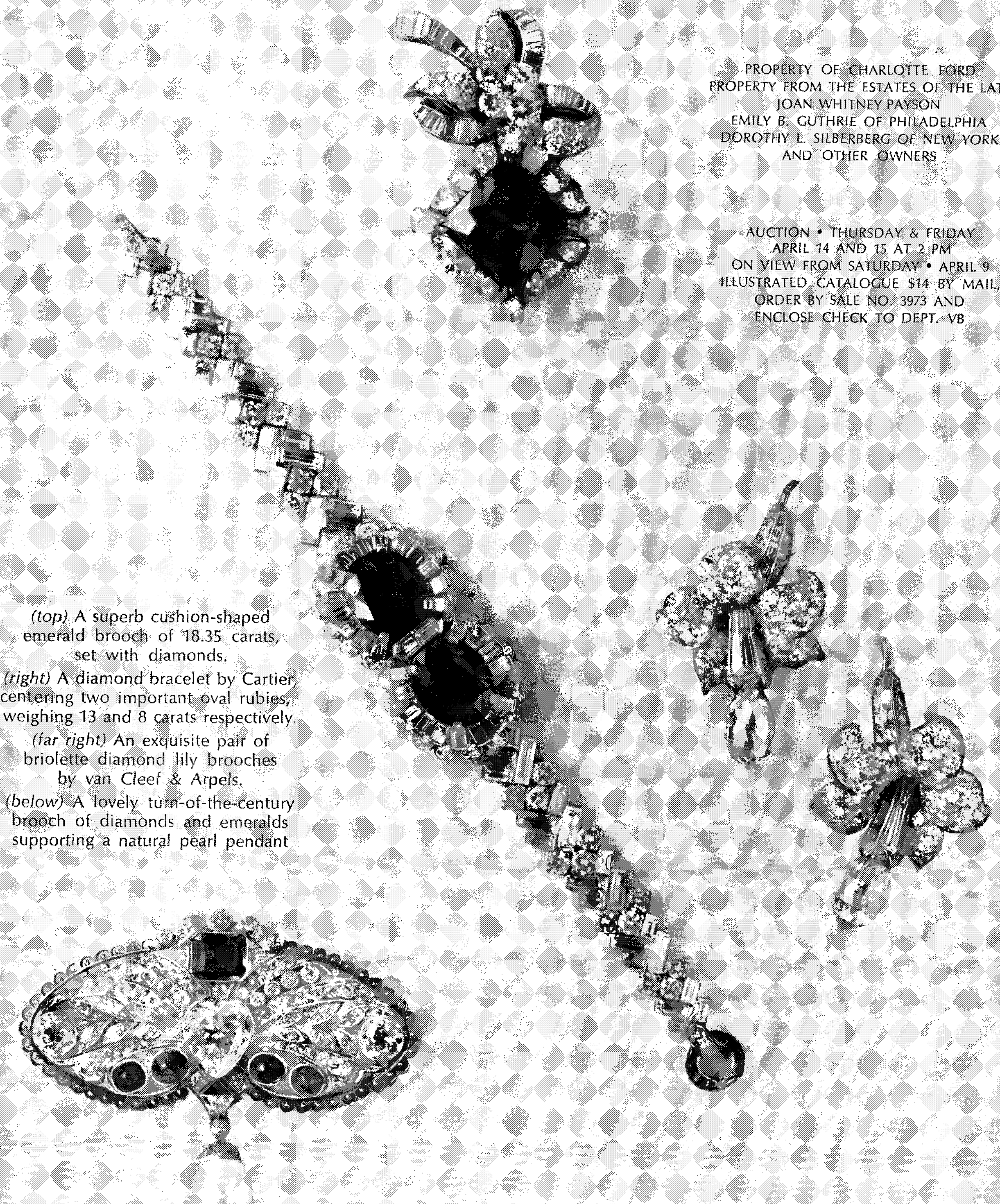

(top) A superb cushion-shaped emerald brooch of 18.35 carats, set with diamonds.

(right) A diamond bracelet by Cartier, centering two important oval rubies, weighing 13 and 8 carats respectively.

(far right) An exquisite pair of briolette diamond lily brooches by van Cleef & Arpels.

(below) A lovely turn-of-the-century brooch of diamonds and emeralds supporting a natural pearl pendant

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wood furniture and ceiling beams, resembles a college dining commons. Basie alumnus and trumpeter **JOE NEWMAN** heads up a quartet Thursday through Saturday, March 17-19. Then, Thursday through Saturday, March 24-26, alto saxophonist, flutist, contrabass clarinettist, and new-music hero **ANTHONY BRAXTON** and a few other highly regarded musical associates will be present. Braxton, whose various collective-improvisation groups have done much toward merging and decategorizing jazz and new music, has noted as his influences Ornette Coleman, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Paul Desmond. On Sunday, March 20, from seven to eleven, two super groups from the loft-jazz scene—baritone saxophonist **HAMIET BLUIETT'S** sextet and drummer **ANDREW CYRILLE'S** group, **MAONO**—will perform. Music from ten to two-thirty Thursdays through Saturdays.

STRYKER'S, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754)—Deceptively sleepy-looking from the outside, this small, dark, and pleasant upper West Side bar sees various first-rate jazz groups pass through every week. The **NEW CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS** will be here Wednesday, March 16, and they are probably the best of all the repertory groups. The splendid personnel includes **DICK SUDHALTER** on cornet (he is the leader, too) and the magisterial **JIMMY MAXWELL** on trumpet, a reed section of **SAM PARKINS**, **AL GALLADORO**, and **EDDIE BAREFIELD**, and a rhythm section of **DILL JONES** on piano, **VINCE GIORDANO** on tuba, bass, and bass saxophone, and drummer **TOMMY BENFORD**, who was there when Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver and Armstrong were putting it all together. **DAVE MATTHEWS** leads a big band every Monday; Rod Levitt's orchestra squeezes in on Thursday, March 17; on Friday and Saturday, March 18-19, guitarist **JOE PUMA** will lead a quintet; and **LEE KONITZ** will return with his nonet on Wednesday and Thursday, March 23-24. Music from nine-thirty. Closed Sundays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave., S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A knotty-pine-and-brick-walled jazz room with the kind of informal coziness you'd expect to find in Aspen. **RON CARTER** is here with his current quartet—pianist **KENNY BARRON**, drummer **BEN RILEY**, and bassist **BUSTER WILLIAMS**. Carter has lately taken up the piccolo bass as his main instrument when he works as a leader. The smaller instrument produces a considerably less full and, for some listeners, a less satisfying sound than his usual double bass, but Buster Williams' solos appease those listeners. **BOB MOVER**, an awesome hard-bop alto saxophonist in his early twenties, heads up a quintet on Mondays; and pianist Richie Beirach's quartet performs on Sundays. Music from nine-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, from ten on Fridays and Saturdays, and from eight to twelve on Sundays. Dinner.

TRAMPS, 125 E. 15th St., at Irving Pl. (260-0370)—Helen Schneider, whose style is about halfway between Liza Minnelli's and Grace Slick's, finishes up on Saturday, March 19. On Wednesday, March 23, **SID SELVIDGE**, a resident of Memphis, where he is much better known, will return to these quarters. Selvidge ambles onto the stage like an absentminded folksinger, but when he begins singing, it's clear he knows exactly what he's doing. His relaxed, nonsense-song interpretations of blues by Furry Lewis, Ivory Joe Hunter, and others are right on the mark. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. Dinner.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—**HELLMAN'S ANGELS** (see above) is in the bar here Wednesdays from nine-fifteen to midnight.... ¶ Downstairs, flutist **HERBIE MANN** and his band, the Family of Mann, will perform Friday and Saturday, March 18-19; and Friday and Saturday, March 25-26, have been set aside for the stylized and dramatic vocalist Novella Nelson. Fridays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty, and Saturdays at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011)—The air quality in this world-famous jazz institution is unacceptable, but go anyway. **ZOOT SIMS**, who plays dancing solos on his tenor saxophone, winds up six nights here with his quartet on Sunday, March 20; on Tuesday, March 22, **SONNY FORTUNE**, a driving, hard-edged alto saxophonist, will descend the staircase with his quintet.

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The very fine trumpeter **WOODY SHAW** will lead a medium-sized ensemble (eight to ten pieces) on the next two Mondays. Music from ten.

WEST BOONDOCK, 114 Tenth Ave., at 17th St. (924-9723)—A soul-food *boîte* with a friendly staff, hundreds of gold Christmas ornaments hanging (year round) from the ceiling, a near-impenetrable layer of sawdust on the floor, and some glowing piano-bass duos. The keyboard chores are divvied up between Steve Elmer, who plays Mondays through Wednesdays, and Nat Jones, who has the Thursday-through-Sunday shift. Music begins at eight.

WEST END CAFÉ, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The old hangout for beatniks and Columbia students is now a bricked-and-boarded cafeteria and music room. Mondays and Tuesdays, Franc Williams is in charge of a quartet that features pianist Harold Mabern and trombonist and electric-guitar pioneer Eddie Durham; on Wednesdays, **JO JONES** commands a quartet; and on Thursdays and Fridays, George Kelly, who played with the Savoy Sultans in the forties, leads a group called the Jazz Sultans. Saturdays and Sundays are usually session times for the likes of **EARLE WARREN**, **BUDDY TATE**, and Paul Quinichette, and a rhythm section. Guitarist **TINY GRIMES**, who still bebops on just four strings, will lead his trio on Saturday, March 26. Music from nine to one.

JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

INTERLUDES—A varied series of hour-long performances at Town Hall (JU 2-4536)—Wednesday, March 16, at 5:45: **BETTY WALKER**. . . . ¶ Wednesday, March 23 (postponed from Jan. 12), at 5:45: **TOMMY TUNE**.

HEROES OF EARLY JAZZ—Eubie Blake and the Sam Wooding Orchestra, with Rae Harrison and Taft Jordan. (Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl. 598-3757. Wednesday, March 16, at 8.)

TOMMY MAKEM AND LIAM CLANCY—Town Hall. Wednesday, March 16, at 8:30.

BREAD—Avery Fisher Hall. TR 4-2424. Wednesday, March 16, at 8:30.

BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND, RUSH, and **STARZ**—A concert postponed from March 6. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. Thursday, March 17, at 8. For information about tickets, call 541-7290.)

COUNT BASIE AND BILLY ECKSTINE—Carnegie Hall. CI 7-7459. Friday, March 18, at 8.

DOC AND MERLE WATSON, TOM PAXTON, and **SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE**—Hunter College Assembly Hall, Park Ave. at 69th St. Friday, March 18, at 8. For information about tickets, call 541-7290.

EAGLES and **JIMMY BUFFETT**—Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Friday, March 18, at 8.

IGGY POP and **BLONDIE**—Palladium. Friday, March 18, at 8.

PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND—Avery Fisher Hall. Friday, March 18, at 8.

FRANK LOWE QUARTET—Top of the Park, Loeb Student Center, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl. 598-3757. Friday, March 18, at 8:30.

PETER GABRIEL and **STEVE HUNTER**—Palladium. Saturday, March 19, at 8.

JIMMY OWENS—With Billy Cobham and the Collective Black Artists Ensemble. (Town Hall. Saturday, March 19, at 8.)

GEORGE COLEMAN OCTET—New York Jazz Museum, 236 W. 54th St. 765-2150. Sunday, March 20, at 2, 3, and 4.

LYRICS AND LYRICISTS—The fourth in a series of five programs in which lyricists (in this case E. Y. Harburg) discuss their work, sometimes with the assistance of their professional performing friends. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Sunday, March 20, and Wednesday, March 23, at 8.)

GINO VANNELLI—Town Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 8:30.

LILY TOMLIN—Biltmore Theatre, 261 W. 47th St. 582-5340. Previews Tuesday and Wednesday, March 22-23. Opens Thursday, March 24, at 7. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.

DAVID BROMBERG BAND and **AZTEC TWO-STEP**—Avery Fisher Hall. Friday, March 25, at 8.

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE and **THE STANKY BROWN GROUP**—Palladium. Friday, March 25, at 8.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

WILL BARNET—Small, early watercolors and drawings, some of them abstract and some of them figurative, with a foretaste of the big graphics yet to come. Through Saturday, March 26. (Gurewitsch, 55 E. 74th St. Opens at 1.)

AL BLAUSTEIN—Figurative paintings and sketches of objects—paint boxes, easels—around the artist's studio. Through April 2. (ML Gallery, 58 E. 79th St.)

RICHARD JEROME BOGART—Misty, impressionistic paintings of secret places deep in the woods of Connecticut, most of them along a pond that reflects some of the greenery. Through April 2. (Poindexter, 24 E. 84th St.)

GILLIAN BRADSHAW-SMITH—Painted cast-stone torsos, plus crayon drawings of elephantine creatures. Through Saturday, March 19. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

JORGE CASTILLO—Carefully executed still-life elements (teacups, fruits, plants) in interiors that almost overwhelm them. Through Saturday, March 26. (Lefebre, 47 E. 77th St.)

DOUGLAS DAVIS—A series of six prints made in a variety of techniques and distinguished by the fact that four of them are hand-finished with impressions of the artist's ear, foot, and hand. Also other works by this Conceptualist. Through Saturday, March 26. (Feldman, 33 E. 74th St. Open Mondays.)

TONY DELAP—Solid-color acrylic paintings done on shaped canvases with handsomely carpentered raw-wood frames that are an integral part of the composition. Through March 30. (Elkon, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

LOUIS FINKELSTEIN—Landscapes done in New York City locations. Through March 31. (Arsenal Gallery, 830 Fifth Ave., at 64th St. Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 5.)

LLYN FOULKES—Humorous collage portraits combining painting and photography. Through Saturday, March 19. (Gruenebaum, 25 E. 77th St.)

ROLAND GEBHARDT—Square sculptures: large marble pieces about twelve inches off the floor and smaller tabletop works in polished aluminum. Through April 2. (Carlton, 127 E. 69th St.)

WILL HORWITT—Large, free-standing wooden sculptures (one of them is about ten feet tall), plus boxed wall pieces. Through Saturday, March 26. (Ault, 25 E. 77th St.)

RON ISAACS / SCOTT BELVILLE—Surprisingly realistic representations of antique clothing, frilly dresses, work gloves, and so on, all made of painted plywood. / Miniature art galleries (or sections of them) hung with miniature abstract paintings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Knowlton, 19 E. 71st St.)

JULIO FERNANDEZ LARRAZ—Realist paintings, drawings, and pastels by a young Cuban-born artist who usually gets an enigmatic, almost sinister quality into his work. Through Saturday, March 26. (FAR Gallery, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St. Open Mondays.)

RICHARD LINDNER—Nineteen works, ranging over the past twenty years, by this portrayer of gaudy characters who might have been cast out of the world of "The Threepenny Opera" for wickedness; a benefit show in this gallery's stylish new quarters. Through Saturday, March 19. (Reed, 120 E. 78th St. Opens at 1.)

HERMAN MARIL—Recent works by this Baltimore artist, who paints with a kind of shorthand, doing interiors and landscapes, and seascapes that afford a glimpse of the ocean through

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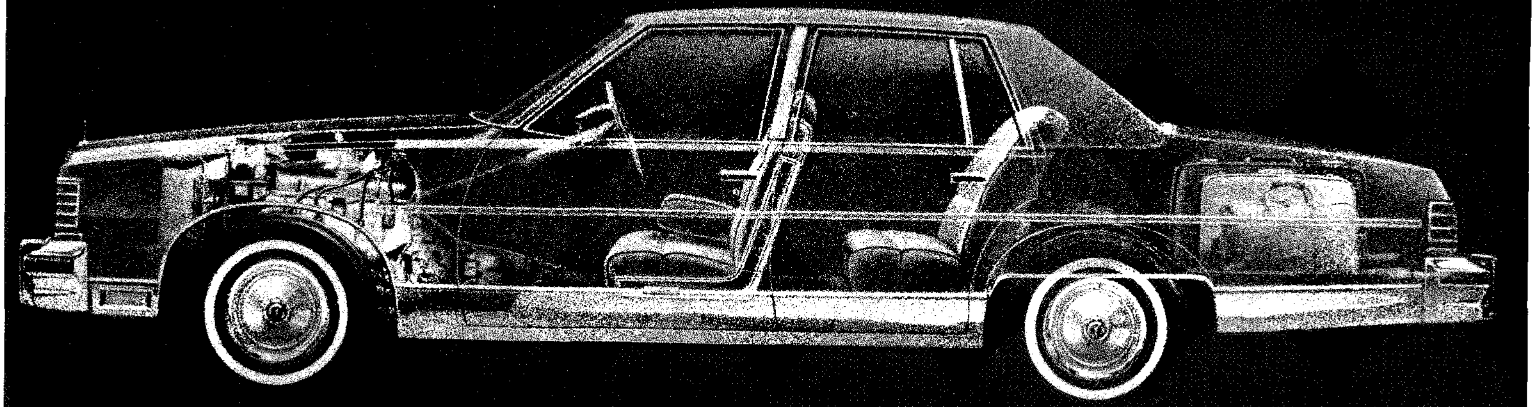

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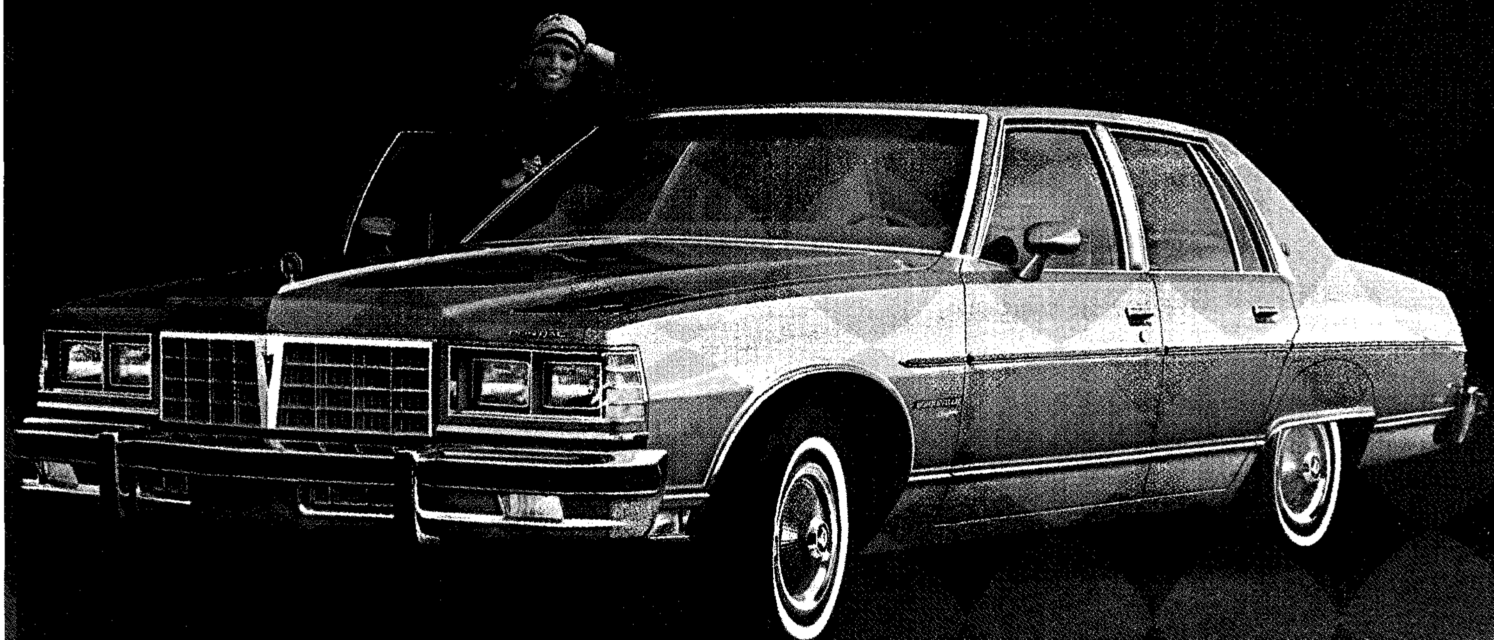

PONTIAC THE MARK OF GREAT CARS

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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a gaping cut in the sand dunes. Through Friday, March 25. (Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Charles E. Martin—Magazine-cover designs and watercolors of landscapes and still-lifes. Through April 9. (Nicholls, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Susan Moss / Larry Mohr—Abstract paintings made with a mixture of Rhoplex and acrylics, which gives the works a glassy, translucent texture. Among the artist's busiest tools is a pastry bag. / Geometric tabletop and floor-piece sculptures, mostly of hollow-form triangles in various combinations, done in polished aluminum or bronze. Through Saturday, March 26. (Findlay, 984 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

John Napper—Romantic, realist paintings of the Shropshire countryside. Through March 31. (Larcada, 23 E. 67th St. Open Mondays.)

Gabor Peterdi—New landscape paintings, some of them semi-abstract, as in a vast plain flecked with plants of a golden hue, and some quite realistic, as in a wintry, leafless forest scene in which every branch stands out starkly against the snow. Through March 31. (Borgenicht, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Edith Schloss—Flowers, birds, and the sea are the main subjects of this artist's deceptively childlike watercolors and oils, all done in the purest of colors. Through Saturday, March 19. (Ingber, 3 E. 78th St.)

Karl Schrag—Oils and gouaches are the mediums for this artist's muscular renditions of the hills of Maine and the jungles of Jamaica. Through Saturday, March 19. (Kraushaar, 1055 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Joan Semmel—Detailed topographical surveys of the artist's own body as she sees it, looking down between her breasts. The painting is extraordinarily realistic without being Photo or Magic or any of the other splinter groups of realism. Through March 31. (Lerner-Heller, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Arlie Sinaiko and Suzanne Sinaiko—Abstract bronze sculptures by the former and paintings with figures by the latter. Through Saturday, March 26. (Bodley, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Pravoslav Sovák—Desert landscapes whose vistas include such geometric images as pyramids and rainbows delicately rendered in watercolor, gouache, and pencil. Through April 2. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

Anthony Toney—Semi-abstract cityscapes. Through April 2. (ACA, 25 E. 73rd St.)

Frederick Wardy—Acrylic paintings with slender vertical lines. Through March 31. (Willard, 29 E. 72nd St.)

Group Shows—At the **CENTER FOR INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS**, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St.: A hundred contemporary Latin-American artists, showing figurative and abstract drawings of exceptional style and elegance in mediums that include pencil, watercolor, and ink. Through Sunday, March 20. (Daily, except Mondays, noon to 6.) . . . **DAVIS & LONG**, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St.: American and English drawings and watercolors (nearly fifty in all) by Anne Ryan, Everett Shinn, David Cox, and others. Through March 31. . . . **FEIST**, 1125 Madison Ave., at 84th St.: Drawings, dating from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth, by about fifty artists, among them Annibale Carracci and Paulus Potter. Through April 16. (Open Mondays.) . . . **FOURCADE**, 36 E. 75th St.: A refreshing exhibit of choice works on paper, small-scale sculptures, and fascinating oddments by such artists as Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Cornell, Joan Mitchell, and Tony Smith. Through Saturday, March 19. . . . **GRAHAM**, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: In an exhibition called "The Art of Pastel," Robert De Niro and Paul Resika contribute figures and landscapes that have a swift, dashed-off appearance, and Anne Poor catches the stiff, brambly quality of a wintry landscape, finding a kind of beauty even in intrusive power lines. Through April 2. . . . **PERLS**, 1016 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Some of the gallery's reserve strength has been brought out for display—a Pascin portrait of the French critic André Salmon painted on brown paper, with vignettes of Parisian high life in the background; a mistral blowing, by Soutine; one of Chagall's valentines; and a villa by Dufy with a glimpse of the sea in the distance. Through Saturday, March 26. . . . **STONE**, 48 E. 86th St.: Large watercolors of the Appalachians in Virginia done on the spot by Ray Kass with a thoroughness reminiscent of Currier & Ives scenery; farm tools (by William Umbreit) that have gone haywire—one tine of a pitchfork droops down and coils around the handle, for instance, and the handle of a sledge is tied in knots; abstract sculptures made of chunky sections chopped out of logs and painted bright colors, by John Anderson. Through March 31. . . . **WEYHE**, 794 Lexington Ave., at 61st St.: "Landscapes/Cityscapes," paintings and graphics by Vincent Canade, Louis Lozowick, and others. Through April 2.

Berlin Now—A month-long survey of that city's current cultural aspects (art, music, literature, film, urbanism), spread out all over this city's theatres, galleries, and institutes. This week, in the matter of art, there will be a show of collages by Hannah Höch, at Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St. (starts Friday, March 18; open Mondays); a group show of Pop, Op, and Minimal artists at the Galerie Denise René loft, 484 Broome St. (starts Saturday, March 19); a group show of realist paintings, drawings, and sculptures at the New School, 65 Fifth Ave. (starts Tuesday, March 22; Mondays through Thursdays, noon to 8; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 5); and a showing of videotapes at The Kitchen, 484 Broome St. (starts Tuesday, March 22; opens at 1). For information about the survey in general, call 744-8472 weekdays.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

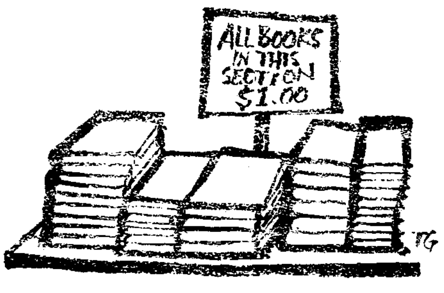
Robert Barnes / William T. Wiley—A series of seventeen small narrative paintings, garish in color and centered on various incidents (and imagined incidents) in the lives of Edward Trelawny, Shelley, and Byron. / This artist, known for his cartoonlike paintings and ramshackle constructions made of trash, has completed a book, entitled "Suite of Daze," and preliminary drawings and finished etchings for it are on display here, along with the book itself, beautifully bound in leather. Through April 1. (Frumkin, 50 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; open Saturdays at noon; closed Sundays.)

Robert Courtright / Frank Keller—Collages made of small squares snipped from magazine pages. / Abstract compositions consisting of simple geometric forms (inspired by Stonehenge). Through Saturday, March 26. (Crispo, 41 E. 57th St. Mondays through Fridays, 11:30 to 4:30; Saturdays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

John Day—More or less abstract paintings in which the viewer is led through monumental chambers of some sort toward a distant glow; the walls in some of them have shadowy friezes, done in collage, showing long-ago musical and theatrical figures. Through March 31. (Alonzo, 30 W. 57th St.)

Sherman Drexler—In addition to the silhouettes of husky female nudes that this painter is well known for (his wife is a novelist who was once a lady wrestler), this exhibition includes a couple of canvases depicting horses and donkeys. Through March 29. (Aaron Berman, 50 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956)—Etchings and woodcuts. Through April 1. (Associated American Artists, 663 Fifth Ave., at 53rd St. Open Mondays.)



Mary Frank—Fragmented sculpture—a head here, a torso there, and sometimes both arms and legs—molded from sheets of clay, fired by the artist herself, and assembled the way she wants them. Through Saturday, March 19. (Zabriskie, 29 W. 57th St.)

Sidney Goodman—Representational paintings by a Philadelphia artist in the line of Eakins and Sargent. Through April 2. (Dintenfass and Sumers, both at 50 W. 57th St.)

Marina Karella—White on white canvases suggesting a landscape or a draped figure; first solo show in New York. Through Saturday, March 26. (Iolas, 52 E. 57th St.)

Rockwell Kent (1882-1971)—A retrospective that includes his stark landscapes of Greenland in winter as well as graphics, textiles, and other works. Through Saturday, March 19. (Hammer, 51 E. 57th St.)

Yves Klein (1928-62)—Monochrome paintings, some in his characteristic piercing blue and one in flaky patches of gold leaf that flutter with the slightest current of air. Also present are examples of his sculpture done with sponges and his noted prints in which inked-up nude girls stamped imprints of their bodies on paper. Through April 2. (Janis, 6 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Lee Krasner—Collages based on charcoal drawings done nearly forty years ago, under Hans Hofmann's tutelage, and now dimmed with time. They have been incorporated into recently done abstractions on large, sepia-colored canvases. Through Saturday, March 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Winifred Lutz—Wall pieces constructed of raw-looking handmade paper, most of it laced with colored twines and stretched on frameworks made of slender rods of fir. Other pieces are mounted in Plexiglas boxes. First solo show in New York. Through Thursday, March 24. (Pearl, 29 W. 57th St.)

Carlos Mérida—Cubist paintings and works on paper. Through April 30. (Jackson, 521 W. 57th St.)

Dolly Moreno—About thirty stainless-steel sculptures that are held together by magnetic force, plus a functional piece that incorporates a stereo system. Through Saturday, March 26. (Selected Artists, 655 Madison Ave., at 60th St. Open Mondays.)

Donn Moulton—Enormous apples, nearly four feet tall, which seem to be growing out of the walls they hang on. They are cast in the half-round in fibre glass and painted realistically with lacquer. Through March 31. (Kornblee, 20 W. 57th St.)

Vita Petersen—Pencil drawings done on a hard, glossy paper and depicting such varied subjects as bath towels and washcloths hanging on a rack, a rumpled shirt draped over a chair, and cityscapes that combine reality and futuristic fantasy. Through Saturday, March 19. (Parsons-Dreyfuss, 24 W. 57th St.)

Peter Reginato—Abstract welded-steel sculptures. Through March 31. (De Nagy, 29 W. 57th St.)

Bruce Robbins—Fifteen ladders, each about eight feet tall, some silvery and some white, leaning against the gallery walls. The backs of the ladders are in startlingly contrasting colors. Through Saturday, March 19. (Truman, 38 E. 57th St.)

Robert Sivard—Matisse, Degas, Hemingway, Picasso, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and other members of that pantheon as they might have appeared on the streets of Paris in front of their favorite hangouts, whose façades are re-created with loving detail. Through Saturday, March 19. (Midtown, 11 E. 57th St.)

Charmion von Wiegand—Tibetan motifs are applied by a Western hand in these prismatic, Symbolist paintings by a New York woman who knew Mondrian way back when and has benefitted by it. Through Saturday, March 26. (Zarre, 41 E. 57th St.)

Robert Yasuda—Paintings of cleanly divided cream-colored areas applied to narrow canvases. Also drawings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Parsons, 24 W. 57th St.)

Group Show—Paintings, dating from 1875 to 1950, by American artists, including Prendergast, Demuth, Evergood, Marin, Sloan, and Levine, and a surprising still-life, entitled "Breakfast Table," by Stuart Davis, done

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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around 1915, before his style had hardened into its ultimate classic form. Through Saturday, March 19. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

David Budd—Big panels of solid-color oil paint, mostly in tones of gray, laid on thick with a palette knife. Through Saturday, March 19. (Hutchinson, 138 Greene St.)

Peter Campus—Short subjects seen on videotapes—for instance, a man's head being wrapped in countless layers of Saran wrap, which crackles as the job is being done. Through Saturday, March 19. (The Kitchen, 484 Broome St. Opens at 1.)

Theophil Groell—Paintings of nudes. Through March 31. (Green Mountain, 135 Greene St. Opens at noon.)

Donald Judd—Fifteen clean-cut boxes, five feet square and three feet tall, beautifully made of raw American Douglas fir plywood (no knots visible anywhere), each of which has some one element of construction—a rim, a lid, a double wall—that makes it different from the others. Through April 16. (Friedrich, 141 Wooster St. Opens at noon.)

Penny Kaplan—Models for outdoor sculptures, works on paper, and photographs of the sites on which she bases her pieces. Through March 30. (14 Sculptors, 75 Thompson St.)

Jean Le Gac—Conceptual-narrative works using photographs and commentary. Through March 30. (Gibson, 392 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 9:30.)

Sol LeWitt—This artist's latest crop of open five-inch cubes (he makes them, or has them made, of narrow strips of birch) take up a whole room in the gallery, giving it the look of a cave full of stalactites and stalagmites. Through Saturday, March 19. (Weber, 420 West Broadway.)

Cork Marcheschi / James Havard—Hand-operated kinetic sculptures that produce electrical discharges. / Abstract paintings with scattered trompe-l'oeil effects. Through April 6. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

Don Nice—New works, including huge realist watercolors of a bison, a jackrabbit, and other animals, with every hair delineated, plus a series showing the Hudson River in all *four seasons, framed by smaller works* depicting tokens of each season—picnic leftovers, for example, or a pair of snow boots. Through March 30. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Ray Parker—New abstract paintings drawn on backgrounds of unusual color, with streaks of contrasting paint squeezed on directly out of the tube. Some of them evoke landscapes, some the human figure, and some simple caprice. Through Saturday, March 19. (Caldwell, 383 West Broadway. Open Wednesday *evenings until 9:30.)*

Liliana Porter / Eleanor Hubbard—This artist pays homage to Magritte and Borges by making small-scale collages and photoetchings referring to their works—that apple-headed man, for instance. / The lower gallery is one huge cat's cradle of twine, on which Miss Hubbard has stationed bright-colored paper dolls and cutout kittens and dogs and other creatures who prowl the nursery. Through Saturday, March 26. (Hundred Acres, 456 West Broadway.)

David Reed—Long narrow panels, most of them divided into three sections, one a solid bright color, and the others a single wide brush stroke (usually black) that frays out at either end. Through March 30. (Protetch, 157 Spring St.)

Tony Robbin—Abstract acrylic paintings. Through April 5. (Alessandra, 489 Broome St.)

Art Rosenbaum—Figurative paintings (some with musicians, others with nudes) that juxtapose the rural South of today with the South of thirty years ago. Through March 30. (Razor, 464 West Broadway. Opens at 1.)

Sean Scully—Large panels and diptychs made up of horizontal strips, about three-quarters of an inch wide, done in two shades of gray. First one-man show in New York by an artist well known in London. Through March 31. (Duffy-Gibbs, 157 Spring St.)

Mary Shaffer / Peter Gutkin—The front gallery is darkened for a display of lighting and audio effects involving columns of homemade glass studded with forty-penny nails, a wall that whispers if you put your ear to it, and random slivers of light in odd corners. / Wall pieces made of vertical shafts of rough timber faced with heavy plate glass, and floor pieces made of plate glass topped with thick slabs of solid steel. Through Saturday, March 26. (O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Rosalind Shaffer—Life-size wooden cutouts of street people—two prostitutes, a motorcycle freak, a bag woman, and so on—painted realistically and shown in an appropriate setting. Through March 30. (SoHo 20, 99 Spring St. Opens at noon.)

Arlene Sklar-Weinstein—Braided-fibre-and-acrylic on canvas. Through March 30. (Westbroadway, 431 West Broadway.)

Grace Bakst Wapner / Martin Bressler—Velvet-and-satin sculptures. / Encaustic drawings. Through March 30. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

William Wegman—Conceptual photographs and ink drawings, usually visual puns. For instance, two drawings, alike in every detail, are entitled, respectively, "Duck" and "Decoy." Through Saturday, March 26. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

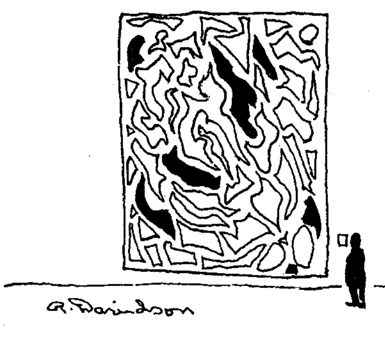
Lynton Wells—Vast, misty canvases in which lighting fixtures and their umbilical wiring can be made out among the potted plants of an indoor fernery. The paintings were done in oil and acrylic over photographs enlarged onto sensitized linen. Through Saturday, March 26. (Emmerich, 420 West Broadway.)

Tino Zago—Abstract works in which layers of wet acrylic paint are laid on and then scraped off certain sections of canvas. Through Saturday, March 26. (Neill, 136 Greene St.)

Robert Zakanitch—Wall-size triptychs on which greatly enlarged repeat patterns, suggestive of Mauve Decade wallpaper, are painted. Most of the patterns are floral. Through Tuesday, March 22. (Holly Solomon, 392 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 9:30.)

Chloe Zerwick—Six new box environments involving surrealistic placement of various steel engravings and found objects. Through Saturday, March 19. (Vorpal, 465 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 9.)

Group Shows—At the **BOWERY**, 135 Greene St.: Stephen Grillo, Gerard Santuoso, Richard Uhlich, and Anthony Santuoso showing paintings. Through March 30. (Opens at 1.) . . . **CASTELLI**, 420 West Broadway: A projector that flashes one word after another on the wall, with slow deliberateness and in no meaningful order, by Robert Barry; a group of pans made of cold-rolled steel, by Donald Judd; a series of splotchy black-and-white drawings, by Robert Morris; and a *glass and neon lighting arrangement in black,* yellow, red, and blue, by Keith Sonnier. Through Saturday, March 19. . . . ¶ In another room, Beryl Korot is showing textiles, a five-channel video, and ink drawings that share similar visual characteristics. Through Saturday, March 26. . . . **SPERONE WESTWATER FISCHER**, 142 Greene St.: Early works by Andre, Flavin, Judd, and LeWitt. Through April 2. . . . **WHITNEY COUNTERWEIGHT**: Fifty-five artists in a three-week, multi-part exhibit that "stands in contrast to the Whitney Biennial." Through April 1, at Auction 393 and Yu, 393 West Broadway. . . . ¶ Cayman, 381 West Broadway. . . . ¶ Aames, 93 Prince St. . . . ¶ Rabinovitch & Guerra, 74 Grand St.



OTHER GALLERIES

Herbert Kallem—Bronze sculptures. Through Saturday, March 26. (Roko, 90 E. 10th St. Opens at noon.)

Bob Lobe—A single large hammered-and-welded-aluminum sculpture, plus three laminated-wood sculptures, all of them suggested by rock shapes. Through May 14. (Hammarskjöld Plaza Sculpture Garden, Second Ave. at 47th St.)

Cy Twombly—Paintings from the last twenty years by a veteran New York artist. Through March 30. (Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. Mondays through Thursdays, noon to 9; Fridays, 11 to 4:30.)

Joe Zucker—Early works, plus a series done in his more recent style—with paint-saturated balls of cotton. Through Saturday, March 19. (Bromm, 114 Franklin St. Opens at 1; open Wednesday evenings until 9.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Diane Arbus (1923-71)—A retrospective that consists of nearly seventy works, a number of them printed by the photographer herself. Through April 2. (Helios, 18 E. 67th St.)

Carlotta Corpron—A series of light studies made in the forties by a onetime colleague of Moholy-Nagy. Through March 30. (Pfeifer, 825 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

George Grosz (1893-1959)—Photographs documenting his arrival in New York, in 1932 (some of the shots are taken from the boat), plus collages, drawings, and watercolors. Through April 9. (Kimmel-Cohn, 41 Central Park W., at 64th St.)

Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940)—A retrospective of two hundred and twenty vintage prints, plus *memorabilia and pictures by some of Hine's* contemporaries, is on view at the Brooklyn Museum. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times. . . . ¶ A smaller selection that is devoted entirely to his photographs of the construction of the Empire State Building from the ground up. Through April 16. (Washburn, 42 E. 57th St.)

Evelyn Hofer / Naomi Savage—Sharply defined photographs of architectural details on building façades, as well as portraits and dye-transfer prints. / Photo-collages, toned-and-colored gum prints, and other works by a *niece of Man Ray.* Through Saturday, March 19. (Witkin, 41 E. 57th St.)

Tina Modotti (1896-1942)—The Museum of Modern Art is showing a selection of her works taken in Mexico, about half of which are vintage prints; the remainder were printed from old negatives by Richard Benson. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Wright Morris—Photographs from his entire career. Through April 23. (Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St.)

Nadar (1820-1910)—A show of more than fifty portraits of artists, writers, and composers is on view at the Metropolitan Museum. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Hans Namuth and Georg Reisner (1913-40)—Photographs that bring home the special horror of the Spanish Civil War by two photographers for a French magazine who arrived in Barcelona the night it began. Through Saturday, March 26. (Castelli Uptown, 4 E. 77th St.)

Milton Rogovin—Portraits of people in Chile, Appalachia, and Buffalo. Through April 22. (Gallery 1199, 310 W. 43rd St. Mondays through Thursdays, noon to 4 and 6 to 8; Fridays, noon to 4.)

Group Show—Photographs and works on paper by Frederick Sommer; Michigan landscapes that include his family and dog by Carl Toth; and Conceptual prints, some in color, by Michael Bishop. Through April 2. (Light, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—An exhibit covering nearly every aspect of the career of Edgar Degas, from early portraits to pastels of dancers and bathers, and including the bronze "Little Fourteen-Year-Old

"Dancer" in her cotton tutu. Unfortunately, the show is padded out with works by other artists (Ingres, Delacroix, Renoir, Hokusai) which are said to have influenced Degas but seem here more distracting than relevant. . . . ¶ A sumptuous exhibit of clothing and accessories from Russia that focusses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and ranges from regional peasant costumes to the wedding dress of Catherine the Great. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Nadar. Through March 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8:45; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—An exhibit of furniture designed by Mies van der Rohe, including the Barcelona chair and stool. Also drawings for his furniture designs. Through May 3. . . . ¶ Henri Matisse's nine-panel paper-cutout work, "The Swimming Pool," is on view on the first floor. . . . ¶ Landscapes in gouache by Australian painter Fred Williams. Through May 8. . . . ¶ A show of posters made by Henri Matisse, Saul Steinberg, Robert Indiana, Larry Rivers, and others to announce their exhibits or other events. Through March 29. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Tina Modotti. Through April 5. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A retrospective of the paintings, drawings, and prints of the Belgian fantasist James Ensor. Through April 10. . . . ¶ Paintings and sculptures by nine "promising" American artists. Through April 7. . . . ¶ A small exhibit of oils and works on paper (all done before 1930) by Piet Mondrian. Through April 14. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—A biennial survey of the American art scene, among the sensations (and mystifications) of which are Chuck Close's huge, incredibly detailed drawings of heads; Barry Le Va's sparse arrangement of slender sticks that occupies an entire gallery, including the floor; Ree Morton's cluttered assemblage of bouquets and ladders and printed words, called "Signs of Love;" and three of Duane Hanson's life-size, lifelike figures. Through March 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 10, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Whitney Downtown Museum, 55 Water St., two blocks south of Wall St.—Conceptual art in its manifold forms by forty artists, among them Eleanor Antin, Victor Burgin, and Joseph Kosuth. Through April 13. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A retrospective exhibition of the paintings and drawings of French Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte. Through April 24. . . . ¶ A review of the output of American women architects, explored through photographs and text, slides, and models. Through April 17. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Lewis W. Hine. Through May 15. (The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays. Hours: Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5. The Caillebotte and architecture exhibits open at 1:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A travelling exhibit, from the Smithsonian Institution, of nearly two hundred art objects from Cyprus, the earliest pieces dating from the Stone Age. Through April 3. (Open daily. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—A memorial show of paintings by Josef Albers, Leonid, and Mark Tobey, all of whom died last year. . . . ¶ Paintings and sculptures by thirty artists who are candidates for Academy-Institute art awards. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.) Both shows through April 9.

Asia House, 112 E. 64th St.—A survey of wood sculptures and decorative art objects from China and Japan dating from the fifth century B.C. to the nineteenth. Buddhist statues, carved lacquerware, burial figures, and folk carvings are among the pieces on exhibit. Through March 27. (Open daily. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The Royal Pavilion at Brighton is the subject of this show. Furniture and decorations from the pavilion, which has a distinctly Chinese interior, were taken to Buckingham Palace by Queen Victoria, and eight of these articles have been loaned to the museum for this show. Through May 22. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of six of the collections that have been entrusted to the library includes drawings, early children's books, and manuscripts, among them thirty-five pages of Einstein's manuscript for his treatise on relativity, from the Heineman Foundation collection, here on view for the first time. Through April 24. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 49 W. 53rd St.—Paintings by New York State folk artists, including Ammi Phillips and Sheldon Peck. Through May 22. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—An exhibit of twelve doll houses, among them a nineteenth-century replica of the Goelet brownstone that stood on Broadway and 19th Street and a contemporary doll house designed last year. Through Sept. 5. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—An immense showing—more than nine hundred items in all—entitled "Two Hundred Years of American Illustration." Through April 15. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, 1 to 5; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"American Sampler" brings together such items from the library's holdings as "Brooklyn in Winter" by Francis Guy, drawings of the American West by George Catlin, original comic-strip art for "Dick Tracy," and a model for "Orpheus" by Noguchi. Through March 30. (Open every day except Thursdays and Sundays. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 9.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 2033 Fifth Ave., at 125th St.—Collages by Al Loving. . . . ¶ Paintings and collages by Randolph Williams. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Wednesday evenings until 9; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.) Both shows through April 17.

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 580-9830, for Avery Fisher Hall TR 4-2424, for Carnegie Hall CI 7-7459, and for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Wednesday evening, March 16: "La Forza del Destino," with Martina Arroyo, Rosalind Elias, Placido Domingo, Cornell MacNeil, Martti Talvela, and Renato Capecchi; conducted by James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, March 17: "Tosca," with Silvia Sass, Ingvar Wixell, and Renato Capecchi; Richard Woitach. . . . ¶ Friday evening, March 18: The Metropolitan's première of Alban Berg's "Lulu," with Carole Farley, Tatiana Troyanos, William Lewis, Donald Gramm, Raymond Gibbs, Lenus Carlson, and Andrew Foldi; James Levine. (A benefit performance; for tickets, call 582-7500.). . . ¶ Saturday matinée, March 19: "La Bohème," with Renata Scotto, Maralin Niska, Luciano Pavarotti, Ingvar Wixell, Paul Plishka, Allan Monk, Italo Tajo, and Andrea Velis; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, March 19: "La Forza del Destino," with Martina Arroyo, Rosalind Elias, Placido Domingo, Cornell MacNeil, Martti Talvela, and Renato Capecchi; James Levine. (A non-subscription performance.). . . ¶ Monday evening, March 21: "Le Nozze di Figaro," with Lucine Amara, Judith Blegen, Maria Ewing, James Morris, Lenus Carlson, Alma Jean Smith, Shirley Love, Andrea Velis, and Renato Capecchi; Steuart Bedford. . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, March 22: "Tosca," with Silvia Sass, Ingvar Wixell, and Renato Capecchi; Richard Woitach. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, March 23: "La Bohème," with Ileana Cotrubas, Renata Scotto, José Carreras, Ingvar Wixell, Justino Díaz, Allan Monk, Italo Tajo, and Paul Franke; James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, March 24: "Lulu," with Carole Farley, Tatiana Troyanos, William

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Lewis, Donald Gramm, Raymond Gibbs, Lenus Carlson, and Andrew Foldi; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday evening, March 25: "Tosca," with Silvia Sass, Ingvar Wixell, and Renato Capecchi; Richard Woitach. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, March 26: "Andrea Chénier," with Martina Arroyo, Lili Chookasian, Placido Domingo, Cornell MacNeil, and Fernando Corena; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, March 26: "La Bohème," with Ileana Cotrubas, Renata Scotto, José Carreras, Ingvar Wixell, Justino Díaz, Allan Monk, Italo Tajo, and Paul Franke; James Levine. (Evenings at 8. Matinées at 2.)

New York City Opera—Wednesday, March 16, at 8: "Der Fliegende Holländer," with Earline Ballard, Richard Taylor, Guillermo Sarabia, and Mark Munkittrick; conducted by Julius Rudel. . . . ¶ Thursday, March 17, at 8: "La Traviata," with Faye Robinson, Lando Bartolini, and Pablo Elvira; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Friday, March 18, at 8: "Louise," with Beverly Sills, Frances Bible, John Alexander, Robert Hale, and Richard Taylor; Julius Rudel. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 19, at 2: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with RoseMarie Freni, Lando Bartolini, and Charles Long, and "Pagliacci," with Clamma Dale, Herman Malamood, Pablo Elvira, and Thomas Jamerson; Giuseppe Morelli. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 19, at 8: "La Bohème," with Catherine Malfitano, Sherry Zannoth, Gaetano Scano, William Justus, Spiro Malas, and Robert Paul; Giuseppe Morelli. . . . ¶ Sunday, March 20, at 1: "Carmen," with Francine Arrauzau, Glenys Fowles, Moises Parker, and Robert Hale; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Sunday, March 20, at 7: "Mefistofele," with Johanna Meier, Ermanno Mauro, and Samuel Ramey; Julius Rudel. . . . ¶ Tuesday, March 22, at 8: "The Marriage of Figaro" (in English), with Clamma Dale, Glenys Fowles, Jeanne Piland, Robert Hale, Richard Fredricks, and Richard McKee; Michael Charry. . . . ¶ Wednesday, March 23, at 8: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with RoseMarie Freni, Lando Bartolini, and William Justus, and "Pagliacci," with Maralin Niska, Herman Malamood, Pablo Elvira, and Vernon Hartman; Giuseppe Morelli. . . . ¶ Thursday, March 24, at 8: "Mefistofele," with Johanna Meier, Samuel Ramey, and Ermanno Mauro; Julius Rudel. . . . ¶ Friday, March 25, at 8: "Carmen," with Francine Arrauzau, Catherine Malfitano, Gaetano Scano, and William Justus; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 2: "The Pirates of Penzance," with Gianna Rolandi, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, Henry Price, William Chapman, William Ledbetter, and Irwin Densen; Judith Somogi. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 8: "La Belle Hélène" (in English), with Susanne Marsee, John Sandor, Harlan Foss, Alan Baker, and Howard Hensel; Lloyd Walser. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. TR 7-4727. Through Sunday, May 1.)

Mannes College of Music—Performances of Tchaikovsky's opera "Iolanta," in English, conducted by Semyon Bychkov, and staged by Harvey Vincent. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Thursday, March 24, at 8; Friday and Saturday, March 25-26, at 8:30; and Sunday, March 27, at 3. For information about tickets, call 737-0700.)

New York Grand Opera Company—Vincent La Selva directing a performance of Leoncavallo's "La Bohème." (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 874-1717. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Erich Leinsdorf conducting—Thursday, March 17, at 8:30; Friday, March 18, at 2; Saturday, March 19, at 8:30; and Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30 (all with Lorne Munroe, cello); and Thursday, March 24, at 8:30; Friday, March 25, at 2; Saturday, March 26, at 8:30; and Tuesday, March 29, at 7:30 (all with Barbara Hendricks, soprano, and Alexis Weissenberg, piano).

Toronto Symphony Orchestra—Andrew Davis conducting, with Alicia de Larrocha, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, March 17, at 8.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall. Monday, March 21, at 8, an all-Brahms program, with Maurizio Pollini, piano. . . . ¶ Carnegie Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, March 23-24, at 8, with Tashi. . . . ¶ Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn College. 859-1180. Saturday, March 26, at 8; no soloists.)

Boston Pops Orchestra—Arthur Fiedler conducting. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, March 22, at 8.)

Los Angeles Philharmonic—At Carnegie Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting—Friday, March 25, at 8: A performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 3, with Florence Quivar, mezzo-soprano; the Swarthmore College Choir; and the Columbus Boychoir. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 8: An all-Beethoven program, with Sidney Harth, violin; Lynn Harrell, cello; and Paul Schenly, piano.

Musica Aeterna Orchestra—Frederic Waldman conducting a concert postponed from Feb. 5, with Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Saturday, March 19, at 8. All seats have been sold, and only standing room is left.)

Municipal Concerts Orchestra—Julius Grossman conducting, with Abbey Simon, piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, March 19, at 8.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Kazuyoshi Akiyama conducting, with Minoru Nojima, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 3.)

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra—Karl Münchinger conducting, with Charles Rosen, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

Colgate Concert Orchestra and University Chorus—William Skelton directing, with the Madison Quartet and others. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Thursday, March 24, at 8.)

Prague Chamber Orchestra—Thirty-six musicians who perform without a conductor. With Hans Richter-Haaser, piano. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Friday, March 25, at 8.)

Brooklyn Philharmonia—David Amram directing, with A. Robert Johnson, French horn; T. Ray Lawrence, bass-baritone; and the Erasmus Hall Chorus. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Saturday, March 26, at 2.)

I Solisti di Zagreb—A Yugoslav chamber orchestra. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside directing a performance of Bach's "St. John Passion," with Barbara Hendricks, soprano; Mary Lee Farris, mezzo-soprano; Peter Pears and Jerold Siena tenors; John Reardon, baritone; Philip Booth, bass; and Edward Brewer, harpsichord. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 7:30.)

Geneseo Chamber Singers—Robert M. Isgro directing. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

RECITALS

Charles Bressler—Tenor. (Mannes College of Music, 157 E. 74th St. 737-0700. Wednesday, March 16, at 8.)

Abel Carlevaro—Classical guitarist. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Wednesday, March 16, at 8.)

James Tocco—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, March 16, at 8.)

Da Capo Chamber Players—With Daniel Shulman, conductor; John Graham, viola; and Andrew Thomas, piano. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Wednesday, March 16, at 8.)

Cleveland Quartet—The fourth in a series of five concerts presenting the Beethoven cycle. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, March 17, at 8.)

Frans Brueggen and Alan Curtis—Recorder/baroque flute and harpsichord. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Thursday, March 17, at 8, a program of baroque music. . . . ¶ Fuentidueña Apse, The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. Sunday, March 20, at 3. For information about tickets, call 923-3700, Ext. 14, Wednesday through Friday.)

Beethoven at the Y—Thursday, March 17, at 8: Samuel Lipman and Jeaneane Dowis, pianos; Samuel Rhodes, viola; Hiroko Yajima and Lucy Chapman, violin; and Yo-yo Ma, cello. . . . ¶ Tuesday, March 22, at 8: The Juilliard String Quartet performing the fourth in a series of six concerts presenting the Beethoven cycle. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000.)

Parnassus—A program of music of our time. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Thursday, March 17, at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—Chamber music. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Friday, March 18, at 8. All seats have been sold, and only standing room is left. . . . ¶ Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, March 23-24, at 8, with Anton Kuerti, piano.)

Walden Trio—Baroque-to-contemporary chamber music. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Friday, March 18, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Judith Blegen—Soprano. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Saturday, March 19, at 8.)

Maurizio Pollini—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, March 19, at 8.)

Eleanor Steber—Soprano, in an all-Mozart benefit recital. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Saturday, March 19, at 8. For information about tickets, call PL 3-0450.)

Fortunato Arico, Albert Fuller, and Charles Bressler—Viola da gamba/cello, harpsichord. *and tenor, in an all-Bach recital.* (Carnegie Recital Hall. Saturday, March 19, at 8:30.)

Ian Shapinsky—Piano. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Sunday, March 20, at 2:30. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Galina Vishnevskaya—Soprano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 3.)

Cantilena Chamber Players—William Masselos, piano; Edna Michell, violin; Harry Zaratzian, viola; and Paul Tobias, cello, in a recital postponed from Feb. 27. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. Sunday, March 20, at 4. For information about tickets, call 860-1888.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The Tokyo String Quartet; James Buswell, violin; Paula Robison, flute; and Charles Wadsworth, harpsichord. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 5, and Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30.)

Juliana Markova—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, March 20, at 8.)

Joseph Villa—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

Violoncello Society—A program of eight compositions written for the cello alone, conducted, in part, by Mstislav Rostropovich. Forty-eight cellists will show up, and thirty-two of them will be at work together on a Villa-Lobos item. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

Group for Contemporary Music—A program of music by Mario Davidovsky, Stephen Dydo, György Legeti, Nicolas Roussakis, and Arthur Krieger. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, 120 Claremont Ave., at 122nd St. Monday, March 21, at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Composers String Quartet—With Carolyne James, mezzo-soprano. (McMillin Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. Tuesday, March 22, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Boehm Quintette—The final concerts of the season. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Wednesday, March 23, at 8. . . . ¶ Same program; Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Thursday, March 24, at 8.) Tickets for either concert at the door on the night of the performance.

Trio Elvetico—Chamber music. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Thursday, March 24, at 8.)

League-ISCM—The fourth in this season's series of six programs of contemporary music, this one performed by Ursula Oppens, piano; Rolf Schulte, violin; and Timothy Eddy, cello. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Thursday, March 24, at 8.)

Sergiu Luca and Albert Fuller—A program of Bach sonatas for violin and harpsichord. The last in a series of recitals. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Friday, March 25, at 8.)

Narciso Yepes—Classical guitarist. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Chamber music. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Saturday, March 26, at 8. For tickets, call 586-4680.)

Francis Heilbut—Piano. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Saturday, March 26, at 8:30.)

Frans Brueggen, Walter Trampler, and Kenneth Cooper—Recorder/baroque flute, viola d'amore, and harpsichord. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Saturday, March 26, at 8:30, and Sunday, March 27, at 2.)

MISCELLANY

Metropolitan Opera National Finals—Eleven singers chosen at the semifinals will appear in the final audition of the 1977 competition sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera National Council. (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 580-9830. Sunday, March 20, at 2.) . . . NOTE: On Wednesday, March 23, at 12:10, the three or four final winners will give a concert at St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St., with the St. Thomas Choir. No tickets necessary.

SPORTS

(The box-office number for Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts., is 564-4400, and for the Nassau Coliseum, Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, L.I., 516 794-9100.)

Professional Basketball—At MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: Knicks vs. Atlanta, Saturday, March 19, at 8. . . . ¶ Knicks vs. Milwaukee, Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Knicks vs. Washington, Saturday, March 26, at 8. . . . NASSAU COLISEUM: Nets vs. Cleveland, Friday, March 18, at 8:05. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Philadelphia, Sunday, March 20, at 1:45. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Kansas City, Wednesday, March 23, at 8:05. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Portland, Friday, March 25, at 8:05.

Hockey—At MADISON SQUARE GARDEN (all games at 7:35): Rangers vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Wednesday, March 16. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. St. Louis Blues, Sunday, March 20. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Colorado Rockies, Wednesday, March 23. . . . NASSAU COLISEUM (all games at 8:05): Islanders vs. Chicago Black Hawks, Saturday, March 19. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Colorado Rockies, Tuesday, March 22. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. St. Louis Blues, Saturday, March 26.

Racing—At AQUEDUCT: Weekdays at 1:30; through Saturday, May 21. The Toboggan Handicap, Saturday, March 19; the Distaff Handicap, Wednesday, March 23; and the Bay Shore, Saturday, March 26. . . . GARDEN STATE PARK, Cherry Hill, N.J.: Weekdays at 2; through Tuesday, May 31. . . . BOWIE, Md.: Daily at 1; through Saturday, March 19. The John B. Campbell Handicap, Saturday, March 19.

Tennis—Virginia Slims Tennis Championship: Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova, and six others, in round-robin play. (Madison Square Garden. Thursday and Friday, March 24-25, at 6; Saturday, March 26, at 11:30; and Sunday, March 27, at 12:30.)

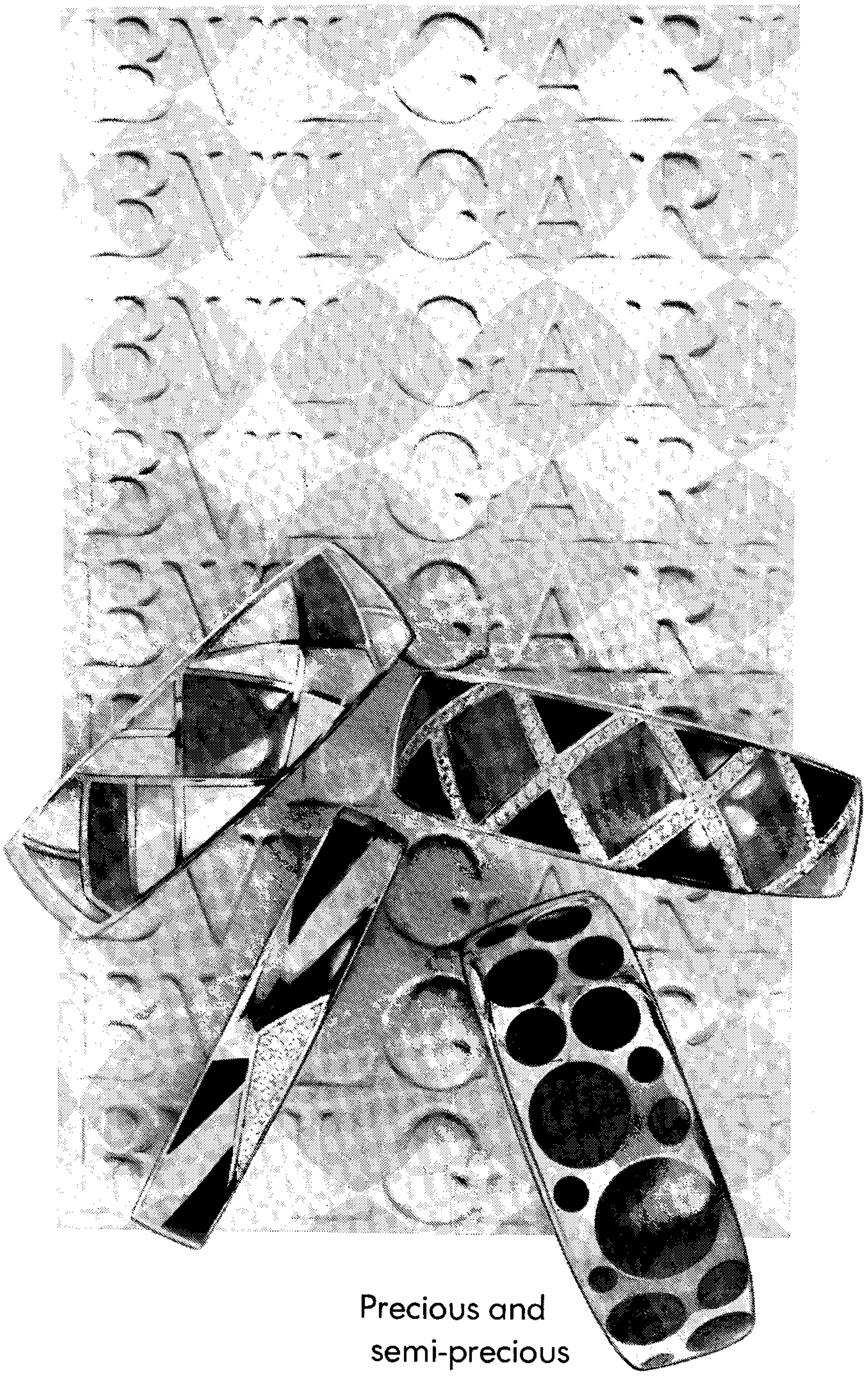
Trotting—At ROOSEVELT RACEWAY, Westbury: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, April 30. . . . MEADOWLANDS RACETRACK, East Rutherford, N.J.: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, July 30.

ET ALIA

(The New York Parks Department number to call for information about all free entertainment in the city is 472-1003.)

Poetry Readings—Konstantin Kuzminsky reading from his own works and from the works of other Leningrad poets. In Russian, with English translations read by Paul Schmidt. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 321 E. 73rd St. 472-0600. Sunday, March 20, at 8.)

Auctions—At Sotheby Parke Bernet, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)—Wednesday, March 16, at 2: Jewelry, from many owners. . . . ¶ Thursday, March 17, at 2, and Friday, March 18, at 10:15: Chinese snuff bottles, jades, and works of art; from a number of owners. . . . ¶ Friday, March 18, at 2, and Saturday, March 19, at 10:15 and 2: Chinese jades, porcelains, English and French furniture, paintings, rugs, and decorations; the property of Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Heinz II.



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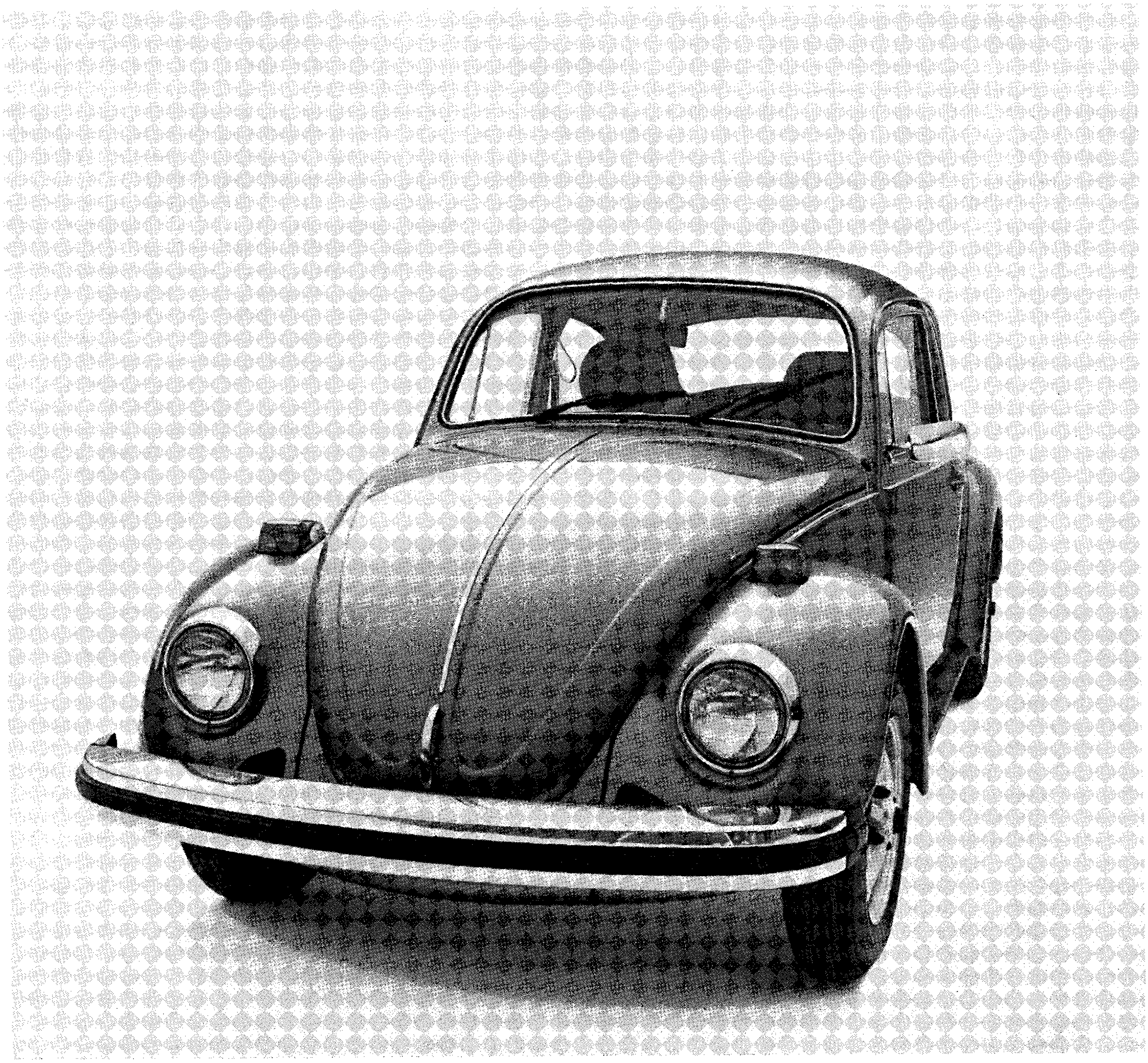

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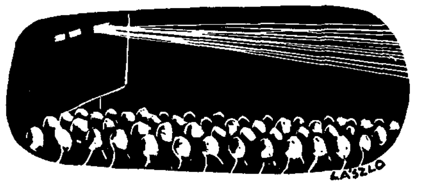
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES



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THE FILMS PLAYING THE REGULAR MOVIE HOUSES ARE DESCRIBED IN BRIEF IN THE SECTION BELOW

EAST SIDE

ART, 36 E. 8th. (GR 3-7014)
Through March 17: "Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000" and "La Salamandre."
From March 18: "Harlan County, U.S.A."

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (GR 5-1660)
"Rocky."

MURRAY HILL, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
"Slap Shot."

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through March 22: "Network."
From March 23: "The Domino Principle."

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Rocky."

SUTTON, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (PL 9-1411)
"The Late Show."

TRANS-LUX EAST, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (PL 9-2262)
"Silver Streak."

FINE ARTS, 130 E. 58th. (755-6030)
"Voyage of the Damned."

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (EL 5-3320)
"Pumping Iron."

BARONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"Welcome to L.A."

CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"Islands in the Stream."

59TH ST. THEATRE, 220 E. 59th. (688-0750)
"Network."

D. W. GRIFFITH, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"F for Fake."

CINEMA I, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-6022)
"Fellini's Casanova."

CINEMA II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-0774)
Through March 17: "Harlan County, U.S.A."
From March 18: "Nasty Habits."

COLUMBIA I, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
"Mohammad, Messenger of God."

COLUMBIA II, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-2720)
"Mohammad, Messenger of God."

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (RE 7-2622)
"Slap Shot."

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (RE 4-0302)
"The Wonderful Crook."

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Fun with Dick and Jane."

72ND STREET EAST, 1st Ave. at 72nd. (BU 8-9304)
Through March 22: "Marathon Man."
From March 23: To be announced.

TRANS-LUX 85TH ST., Madison at 85th. (BU 8-3180)
"Network."

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"A Star Is Born."

LOEWS ORPHEUM, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Through March 22: "The Farmer."
From March 23: "The Domino Principle."

LOEWS CINÉ, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (427-1332)
Through March 17: "Taxi Driver" and "Obsession."
From March 18: "Jaws of Death."

86TH ST. EAST, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
"The Sentinel."

R.K.O. 86TH ST. TWIN 1, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
"Silver Streak."

R.K.O. 86TH ST. TWIN 2, Lexington at 86th. (289-8932)
"Rocky."

WEST SIDE

WAVERLY, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
"Voyage of the Damned."

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through March 22: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Midnight Cowboy."
From March 23: To be announced.

GREENWICH, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
"Network."

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: March 16: "Now, Voyager" and "Marked Woman." March 17-19: "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" and "Deception." March 20-22: "The Corn Is Green" and "The Bride Came C.O.D." From March 23: "Dark Victory" and "Juarez."
Theatre 2: "Rocky."
Theatre 3: Through March 22: "Face to Face." From March 23: "Bound for Glory."
Theatre 4: "The Autobiography of a Flea" (X-rated).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (PL 7-2406)
Through March 22: "Swept Away" and "Seven Beauties." (The theatre will be closed all day on Sunday, March 20.)
From March 23: "Bound for Glory."

MUSIC HALL, 6th Ave. at 50th. (757-3100)
"Mr. Billion."

PLAYBOY, 110 W. 57th. (JU 6-4448)
Through March 22: "The Sentinel" and "Family Plot."
From March 23: "Marathon Man" and "Lipstick."

LITTLE CARNEGIE, 146 W. 57th. (246-5123)
"All the President's Men."

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Cousin, Cousine."

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Providence."

EMBASSY 72ND ST., B'way at 72nd. (SC 4-6745)
Through March 22: "Swept Away" and "Seven Beauties."
From March 23: "Bound for Glory."

LOEWS 83RD TRIPLEX, B'way at 83rd. (877-3190)
Theatre 1: "Network."
Theatre 2: "Thieves."
Theatre 3: "A Star Is Born."

NEW YORKER, B'way at 88th. (TR 4-9189)
"Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven."

OLYMPIA, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Through March 22: "Marathon Man" and "Lipstick."
From March 23: Two X-rated films by Russ Meyer—"Up" and "Supervixens."

REVIVAL HOUSES

(These theatres are showing revivals exclusively, and for abbreviated runs. For reasons of space, or lack of it, only the films marked with a dagger are described in our "In Brief" section, further along.)

BLEECKER ST. CINEMA, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
March 16: "A Piece of Pleasure" (1976), in French, directed by Claude Chabrol, with Paul Gégauff and Danielle Gégauff; and "Bad Company" (1969), in French, directed by Jean Eustache.
March 17: "La Femme Infidèle" (1969), in French, directed by Claude Chabrol, with Stéphane Audran, Michel Bouquet, and Maurice Ronet; and "A Piece of Pleasure."
March 18: "The Bride Wore Black" (†); and "La Femme Infidèle."
March 19: "Bed and Board" (†) and "The Bride Wore Black." (†)
March 20: "Beauties of the Night" (†) and "Bed and Board." (†)
March 21: "The Godfather, Part II" (1974), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.
March 22: "Devil's Cleavage" (1975), an avant-garde film directed by George Kuchar; and "Seven Chances." (†)
March 23: "Chloé in the Afternoon" (1972), in French, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Bernard Verley and Zouzou; and "Claire's Knee" (1970), in French, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Jean-Claude Brialy and Beatrice Romand.
March 24: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965), in Italian, directed by Federico Fellini, with Giulietta Masina; and "Chloé in the Afternoon."

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
March 16: "Two or Three Things I Know About Her" (1967), in French, directed by Jean-Luc Godard, with Marina Vlady; and "A Married Woman" (1965), in French, directed by Jean-Luc Godard, with Macha Meril.
March 17: "Camille" (1927), directed by Fred Niblo, with Norma Talmadge and Gilbert Roland; and "Camille" (1937), directed by George Cukor, with Greta Garbo and Robert Taylor.
March 18: "Lacombe, Lucien" (†) and "The Fire Within." (†)
March 19: "Swing Time" (1936), directed by George Stevens, with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Helen Broderick, Victor Moore, and Betty Furness; and "Shall We Dance" (1937), directed by Mark Sandrich, with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Edward Everett Horton, Jerome Cowan, and Eric Blore.
March 20: "The Adventures of Robin Hood" (1938), directed by Michael Curtiz and William Keighley, with Olivia de Havilland, Errol Flynn, Alan Hale, Ian Hunter, Basil Rathbone, and Claude Rains; and "Robin and Marian" (1976), directed by Richard Lester, with Sean Connery, Audrey Hepburn, Robert Shaw, Nicol Williamson, and Richard Harris.
March 21: "Charlie Chan in Paris" (†) and "Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation." (†)
March 22: "Berliner Bettwurst" (1975), in German, directed by Rosa von Praunheim; and "Diary" (1975), in German, directed by Rudolf Thome.
March 23: "Diabolique" (1955), in French, directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot, with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse; and "Panique" (1946), in French, directed by Julien Duvivier, with Michel Simon, Viviane Romance, and Paul Bernard.
March 24: To be announced.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through March 17: "Frankenstein" (1931), directed by James Whale, with Boris Karloff, Mae Clark, and John Boles; and "Dracula" (1931), directed by Tod Browning, with Bela Lugosi, Helen Chandler, David Manners, and Dwight Frye.
March 18-19: "The Damned" (1969), directed by Luchino Visconti, with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "Death in Venice" (1971), directed by Luchino Visconti, with Dirk Bogarde.
March 20-21: "The King and I" (1956), directed by Walter Lang, with Deborah Kerr and Yul Brynner; and "Carousel" (1956), directed by Henry King, with Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones.
March 22: "The Sorrow and the Pity." (†)
March 23-24: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (†) and "Lenny." (†)

ELGIN, 8th Ave. at 19th. (675-0935)
March 16: "The Godfather, Part II" (1974), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.
March 17-18: "Goldfinger" (1964), directed by Guy Hamilton, with Sean Connery; "From Russia with Love" (†); and "Diamonds Are Forever." (†)
March 19: "Nashville" (1975), directed by Robert Altman, with Ronee Blakley, Lily Tomlin, Barbara Harris, and Henry Gibson; "Buffalo Bill and the Indians" (1976), directed by Robert Altman, with Paul Newman; and "Payday." (†)
March 20-21: "Barry Lyndon" (1975), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Ryan O'Neal and Marisa Berenson; and "Daisy Miller." (†)
March 22: "Play It Again, Sam" (1972), directed by Herbert Ross, with Woody Allen; and "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" (1966), a Japanese film, dubbed in English by Woody Allen.
March 23: "Patton." (†)
March 24: To be announced.

PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
March 16: "Heavy Traffic" (1973), directed by Ralph Bakshi, an animated cartoon; and "The Long Goodbye" (1973), directed by Robert Altman, with Elliott Gould, Nina van Pallandt, Sterling Hayden, and Mark Rydell.
March 17: "If . . ." (1969), directed by Lindsay Anderson, with Malcolm McDowell;

and "The Conformist" (1970), in Italian, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda.

March 18: "The Damned" (1969), directed by Luchino Visconti, with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "A Clockwork Orange" (1971), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Malcolm McDowell.

March 19: "Claire's Knee" (1970), in French, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Jean-Claude Brialy and Beatrice Romand; and *"Chloé in the Afternoon" (1972)*, in French, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Bernard Verley and Zouzou.

March 20: "Nashville" (1975), directed by Robert Altman, with Ronee Blakley, Lily Tomlin, Barbara Harris, and Henry Gibson; and "California Split" (1974), directed by Robert Altman, with George Segal and Elliott Gould.

March 21: "Distant Thunder" (†) and "The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir." (†)

March 22: "The Ballad of Cable Hogue" (1970), directed by Sam Peckinpah, with Jason Robards, Stella Stevens, and David Warner; and "The Wild Bunch" (1969), directed by Sam Peckinpah, with William Holden, Ernest Borgnine, and Robert Ryan.

March 23: "My Night at Maud's" (1970), in French, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Jean-Louis Trintignant; and "Tristana" (1970), in French, directed by Luis Buñuel, with Catherine Deneuve and Fernando Rey.

March 24: To be announced.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through March 19: "The Big Heat" (1953), directed by Fritz Lang, with Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame, Alexander Scourby, and Lee Marvin; and "Beat the Devil" (1954), directed by John Huston, with Humphrey Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Gina Lollobrigida, Robert Morley, and Peter Lorre.

March 20-21: "American Madness" (†) and "Angels Over Broadway." (†)

March 22-23: "Dr. Strangelove" (1964), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, and Sterling Hayden; and "Down to Earth." (†)

From March 24: "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (†) and "The More the Merrier." (†)

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)

Through March 22: "The Marquise of O..." (1976), in German, directed by Eric Rohmer, with Edith Clever and Bruno Ganz; and "Medea" (1971), in Italian, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, with Maria Callas.

From March 23: "Uncle Vanya" (1976), a filmed stage production, directed by Laurence Olivier, with Michael Redgrave, Joan Plowright, and Mr. Olivier.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

March 16: "Forever Amber" (1947), directed by Otto Preminger, with Cornel Wilde, Linda Darnell, Richard Greene, and George Sanders; and "Laura" (1944), directed by Otto Preminger, with Gene Tierney, Clifton Webb, Vincent Price, Dana Andrews, and Judith Anderson.

March 17: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932), directed by Ernst Lubitsch, with Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins, and Edward Everett Horton; and "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" (1938), directed by Ernst Lubitsch, with Claudette Colbert, Gary Cooper, David Niven, and Herman Bing.

March 18-19: "Bulldog Drummond's Peril" (1938), directed by James Hogan, with John Barrymore, John Howard, and Louise Campbell; and "Kennel Murder Case." (†)

March 20-21: "The Private Life of Don Juan" (†) and "The Son of Monte Cristo." (†)

March 22-24: To be announced.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (956-7078)—March 17 at 2:30: "Les Deux Timides" (1928), a French silent film, directed by René Clair, with Maurice de Féraudy and Pierre Batcheff; French inter-titles.... ¶ March 17 at 6: "Pilgrimage to Kevlaar" (1921), a Swedish silent film, directed by Ivan Hedqvist; simultaneous translation.... ¶ March 17 at 8:30: "Häxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages" (1922), a Swedish silent film, directed by Benjamin Christensen; English inter-titles.... ¶ March 18 at 2:30: "High Aspirations" (1921), a Swedish silent film, directed by Rune Carlsten; simultaneous translation.... ¶ March 18 at 6: "Les Deux Timides."... ¶ March 19 at noon: A program of twelve cartoons by Chuck Jones.... ¶ March 19 at 2:30: "Gunnar Hede's Saga" (1922), a Swedish silent film, directed by Mauritz Stiller; English inter-titles.... ¶ March 19 at 5: "Hell Ship" (1922), a Swedish silent film, directed by Victor Sjöström; simultaneous translation.... ¶ March 20 at noon and 2:30: Two different programs of cartoons by Chuck Jones.... ¶ March 20 at 5: "Hotel Imperial" (1927), directed by Mauritz Stiller, with Pola Negri.... ¶ March 21 at noon: A program of eight cartoons by Chuck Jones.... ¶ March 21 at 2:30: "The Norrtull Gang" *(1923), a Swedish silent film, directed* by Per Lindberg; English inter-titles.... ¶ March 21 at 6: A selection of films by Hans Richter.... ¶ March 22 at noon: A program of eight cartoons by Chuck Jones.... ¶ March 22 at 2:30: "Hell Ship."... ¶ March 24 at 2:30: "Life Begins at 40" (1935), directed by George Marshall, with Will Rogers, Richard Cromwell, and Jane Darwell.... ¶ March 24 at 6: "The Norrtull Gang."... ¶ March 24 at 8:30: "The Lady of the Camellias" (1925), a Swedish silent film, directed by Olof Molander; simultaneous translation. (A limited number of tickets are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing. Tickets for the showings at 8:30 will not be accepted before 8.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—Through March 19: A program of video films by Nam June Paik, Segalove, Serra, and Sondheim.... ¶ Starting March 20: A program of video films by Sonnier, Vasulka, Walker, and Wegman. Showings at noon, 2, and 4 (plus 6:15 and 8 on Tuesday evenings). Call desk (794-0630) for ticket information. Closed Mondays.

Anthology Film Archives, 80 Wooster St. (226-0010)—Programs by Dreyer, Cocteau, Bresson, Serra, Brakhage, Etra, Frampton, Cornell, Dovzhenko, and others. Showings March 16-17 at 7 and 9; March 18 at 7, 9, and 10; March 19 at 2:30, 7, and 9; March 20 at 8; and March 22-24 at 7 and 9.

Film Forum, 15 Vandam St., three blocks south of Houston St., at Sixth Ave. (989-2994)—March 17-20: "A City at Chandigarh" (1966), directed by Alain Tanner; and "Mahatma and the Mad Boy" (1975), directed by Ismail Merchant.... ¶ Starting March 24: "My Childhood" *(1972), and* "My Ain Folk" (1973), both directed by Bill Douglas. Showings Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

All the President's Men—Alan J. Pakula's film of the famous book by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward about the uncovering of the Watergate coverup. Woodward is played by Robert Redford, one of our best actors; Bernstein is played by Dustin Hoffman with edgy intelligence. The film is good on newspapers' nervous verve, though it has its share of clichés about the working press. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/12/76.) (Little Carnegie.)

American Madness (1932)—A topical melodrama of the Depression and bank failure, it's about a run on a bank—and with a twist that is purest Hollywood. The big banker (Walter Huston) is the hero, and it's his lower-echelon employees who are the villains. Frank Capra directed, and Robert Riskin wrote the script. Capra's dramatic use of the bank, where almost all the action is set, is ingenious, and the sequences of the mounting panic and the storming of the bank are effectively staged, but the resolution is the usual Capra-Riskin populist hokum: the small depositors, grateful to Huston for his help in the past, bring in their savings to preserve his bank from ruin. Even this early in his career, Capra often underestimated the audience. In some cities, the picture was *too* topical: in Baltimore, it opened the day after a bank panic and closed in forty-eight hours. With Pat O'Brien, Constance Cummings, Kay Johnson, and Gavin Gordon. (Regency; March 20-21.)

Angels Over Broadway (1940)—Ben Hecht wrote, produced, and, with the famous cinematographer Lee Garmes, directed this nightlife story about a poor clerk (John Qualen) who is going to kill himself if he can't get three thousand dollars, and a drunken playwright (Thomas Mitchell) who takes him in charge. The playwright thinks that since sharp gamblers always let you win at poker before they trim you, the trick is to leave the game early. Rita Hayworth and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., are the young lovers who complicate the playwright's plan. Hecht's characters talk too much, but he was a compulsive gambler himself, and there's a genial, original spirit to this movie. (Regency; March 20-21.)

Beauties of the Night (1954)—René Clair's film, with Gina Lollobrigida and Gérard Philipe. Philipe is a small-town music teacher bent on a series of dream conquests. Clair's distinctive light irony is not at its best or most full of character, though the film contains a rather funny intermittent complaint about noise, with the hero connecting high romantic troubles with the sound of a garage beneath his window. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; March 20.)

Bed and Board (1971)—About the married life of Truffaut's hero, Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud). Léaud appears to have developed a dogged resistance to acting, but Claude Jade, as Antoine's bride, who looks like a less ethereal, more practical Catherine Deneuve, is lovely. The movie is cheerful, if conventionally "beguiling." In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; March 19-20.)

Bound for Glory—As Woody Guthrie, David Carradine has an ornery intransigence that gives the film a core, and the re-creation of the late thirties is superbly lighted and shot (by Haskell Wexler). There's real love in the director Hal Ashby's staging of the incidents, and the entire film shows taste and good will. Though it doesn't build dramatically—it straggles just when you want it to soar—it's by no means a negligible piece of work. (12/13/76) (Quad Cinema, Guild, and Embassy 72nd St.; starting March 23.)

The Bride Came C.O.D. (1941)—Bette Davis, taking time off from her big dramatic roles, as an eloping heiress in a screwball farce, with James Cagney opposite her. The heiress is about to marry an obnoxious bandleader (Jack Carson) when her father arranges with a pilot (Cagney) to kidnap her and bring her home. The plane makes an emergency landing in Death Valley, and Davis and Cagney battle each other with wisecracks, and her rump hits a bed of cactus. The material is very tired and the production is so unpretentious it suggests embarrassment, but Davis shrieks her lines happily, and Cagney sticks out his ample gut and holds his ground. Both of them mug good-naturedly, and it's pleasantly fast. Directed by William Keighley, from a screenplay by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein. With Stuart Erwin, George Tobias, Eugene Pallette, Harry Davenport, William Frawley, and Edward Brophy. (Quad Cinema; March 20-22.)

The Bride Wore Black (1968)—Truffaut's film in homage to Hitchcock, with Jeanne Moreau as the racked and elegant widow of a bridegroom shot on the steps of the church. Photographed by Raoul Coutard. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; March 18-19.)

Charlie Chan in Paris (1935)—Warner Oland as Charlie Chan, and Keye Luke in his first appearance as Lee Chan, Charlie's No. 1 son. With Mary Brian, Erik Rhodes, and John Miljan; directed by Lewis Seiler. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; March 21.)

The Corn Is Green (1945)—Bette Davis was only thirty-six when she played Miss Moffat, the aging spinster schoolteacher of Emlyn Williams' play. (Ethel Barrymore had done it on the stage here, Sybil Thorndike in England.) Lacking the moral authority of age and the solidity, Davis substituted an air of pedantic refinement that is too thin-spirited for the material. But the film lingers in the memory anyway. It's on the side of all our angels: education, liberalism, generosity of spirit—and in an emotionally affecting way. Miss Moffat, an Englishwoman, comes to teach school in an illiterate Welsh mining town in 1890, and discovers that one of her students, a young miner (John Dall), has unusual promise—genius, perhaps. It's a shame that the miner is importuned to become the savior of his country; it's also very apparent that Hollywood isn't Wales. But the director, Irving Rapper, rose to the occasion, and the supporting players—Joan Lorring, Rosalind Ivan, Rhys Williams, Nigel Bruce, Mildred Dunnock—have stronger personalities than in most Davis films. (Quad Cinema; March 20-22.)

Cousin, Cousine—Jean-Charles Tacchella's cheerful film about a big family and two Rabelaisian apostates within it. In French. (Paris.)

Daisy Miller (1974)—Henry James's short story, filmed at a pace as hectic as the chatter of Daisy herself. Directed by Peter Bogdanovich, script by Frederic Raphael. In the James story, Daisy's instinct (exactly reported here) is always to beat others by her fervor and her implied insistence that distress and melancholy are easily remediable European diseases of the under-energized. Cybill Shepherd is fine as Daisy. (Elgin; March 20-21.)

Dark Victory (1939)—Bette Davis in a kitsch classic, playing a rich doomed-to-die girl who throws herself away on meaningless pleasures and then finds redemption in unselfish love—with her doctor, George Brent. A gooey collection of clichés, but Davis slams her way through them in her nerviest style. The steals from all over include a Lawrentian stable groom, played by Humphrey Bogart. Ronald Reagan is among the heroine's swains. With Geraldine Fitzgerald. Edmund Goulding directed. (Quad Cinema; starting March 23.)

Deception (1946)—Exquisitely foolish—a camp classic. Alex Hollenius (Claude Rains) is the greatest composer in the United States; his febrile mistress (Bette Davis) can escape him only by shooting him. Considering that he has set her up in the finest apartment in Manhattan, swaddled her in ermine, drenched her in champagne, and taught her to play the piano with a skill approximating that of Rubinstein, some might regard this as rank ingratitude. But he's a venomous genius, and an epicure besides, given to wearing velvet jackets. He treats the cellist (Paul Henreid) whom she loves very shabbily—badgering him until he gets so nervous that he can hardly handle a bow. Irving Rapper, who had directed this trio in "Now, Voyager," let them run rampant this time, especially the leering Rains. (Quad Cinema; March 17-19.)

Diamonds Are Forever (1971)—Tired Bond picture (it was the seventh) that is often noisy when it means to be exciting. It lacks elegance and visual opulence, but it's got Sean Connery (he didn't appear in the sixth, "On Her Majesty's Secret Service"). His Bond is less lecherous than before and less foppish—and he's better this way. In this one, Bond is attacked by two Amazons named Bambi and Thumper. With Charles Gray as Blofeld, Jill St. John as Tiffany Case, and Jimmy Dean as a Howard Hughes-like character. Directed by Guy Hamilton. (Elgin; March 17-18.)

Distant Thunder (1973)—Satyajit Ray sets this film in a torpid Bengali village in the early nineteen-forties. Soumitra Chatterji, Ray's one-man stock company, who played the passionately romantic Apu in "The World of Apu," is cast as a newly arrived Brahmin, the only educated man for miles around. This isn't one of Ray's greatest films; it's forced and riddled with flaws. Yet it's still a Satyajit Ray film, full of feeling and astonishingly beautiful; the women are conceived as in a dream of the past—moving in their thin, clinging saris, they create sensuous waves of color in the steamy air. In Bengali. (11/10/75) (Paramount; March 21.)

The Domino Principle—With Gene Hackman, Candice Bergen, Richard Widmark, Mickey Rooney, Edward Albert, and Eli Wallach; directed by Stanley Kramer. (34th St. East, and Loews Orpheum; starting March 23.)

Down to Earth (1947)—Celestial-whimsy musical, with arch acting and a dull score. Rita Hayworth is the goddess Terpsichore, who descends from Heaven in order to make a Broadway show called "Swinging the Muses" less offensive and more authentic. This was an attempt to cash in on the box-office success of "Here Comes Mr. Jordan," and it used the same director (Alexander Hall) and some of the same characters—Max Corkle and the Heavenly Messenger, played by the same actors, James Gleason and Edward Everett Horton. Mr. Jordan, a high executive on the Other Side, turns up in it, too, with Roland Culver replacing Claude Rains in the role. Larry Parks is the producer of the offending show; he does his own singing here, which jarred the sensibilities of viewers who had seen him in "The Jolson Story," dubbed by Jolson. (His own voice is much less convincingly his.) But it all balances out, since Hayworth's singing is dubbed by Anita Ellis. James Gleason does what he can, but his part is threadbare. With Marc Platt and George Macready. (Regency; March 22-23.)

Face to Face—Ingmar Bergman's relentless chronicle of the edging toward breakdown of a woman psychiatrist (Liv Ullmann). The film is a marvellously vivid and thoughtful—and, surprisingly, witty—record of an unhappy mind's oscillation between ease and agitation. In Swedish. (4/5/76) (Quad Cinema; through March 22.)

Family Plot—Hitchcock's fifty-third film, made in his seventy-seventh year, is perhaps his most sparkling and most good-natured, full of sly jokes. Barbara Harris, never more fully used, contributes a very funny study in feminine hysteria—one of Hitchcock's favorite topics—as a pretty, permanently famished clairvoyant who nearly throttles her boyfriend (Bruce Dern) when their car's brake fluid has been nefariously interfered with. The villains are posh jewel thieves, played by Karen Black and William Devane. Highly recommended, and not at all scary; just larky. (4/19/76) (Playboy; through March 22.)

The Farmer—With Gary Conway, Angel Tompkins, and Michael Dante; directed by David Berlatsky. (Loews Orpheum; through March 22.)

Fellini's Casanova—Fellini's epic about his own alienation; it takes great dedication to sit this one out. Donald Sutherland is used as an unfunny caricature of Casanova. (Cinema I.)

F for Fake—Directed by, and with, Orson Welles. (D. W. Griffith.)

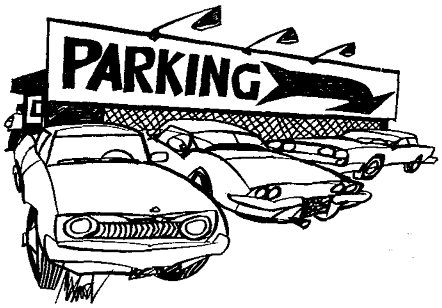
The Fire Within (1963)—A neglected small masterwork. A Scott Fitzgerald-like young man in Paris seeks out a variety of old friends before putting a bullet in his heart. A beautiful picture, thanks to the acting of Maurice Ronet and the direction of Louis Malle. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; March 18.)

From Russia with Love (1964)—The second in the James Bond series—exciting, handsomely staged, and campy—with Sean Connery pitted against a blond Robert Shaw and Lotte Lenya with a dagger in her shoe. Directed by Terence Young. (Elgin; March 17-18.)

Fun with Dick and Jane—A nitwit mixture of counterculture politics, madcap comedy, and toilet humor. George Segal and Jane Fonda are Dick and Jane of the children's primers, grown up, married, and living beyond their means in a suburban-palatial L.A. dream house; when he loses his executive job they turn to robbery. Excruciatingly badly directed by Ted Kotcheff. (2/28/77) (Loews Tower East.)

Harlan County, U.S.A.—A documentary with a great subject, and with the taste and sensitivity not to betray it. The director, Barbara Kopple, went to live among the coal miners of Harlan County, Kentucky, when they went out on strike in 1973. This film is about an underdog group with its own folk culture, based on the unending struggle with "the owners." (1/24/77) (Cinema II; through March 17. . . . ¶ Art; starting March 18.)

Islands in the Stream—The implacable stodginess of this Franklin J. Schaffner version of Hemingway's posthumous novel is stupefying yet impressive. It's fascinating to see Hemingway's themes placed in this huge glass jar for our inspection. George C. Scott gives a scrupulous performance as the fisherman-artist hero living in the Bahamas at the outbreak of the Second World War, who is visited by his three sons from two broken marriages, and then by his first wife (Claire Bloom). By being respectful and dedicated, and incompetent at action, Schaffner and his scenarist, Denne Bart Petitclerc, bring out the worst in Hemingway—his mystique. With Julius Harris, David Hemmings, Gilbert Roland, and Michael-James Wixted as the middle boy, Davy. (3/14/77) (Coronet.)



Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000—A whirling political comedy about the seventies' lunatic fringe of people in their twenties and thirties, each with his own answers to the problems of society. The director, Alain Tanner, and his co-writer, John Berger, are willing to entertain possibilities for social rebirth even if they're cracked or pickled. This picture has a miraculous combination of irony and wit, like Buñuel's "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie." With Miou-Miou, Jean-Luc Bideau, and Raymond Bussières. In French. (10/18/76) (Art; through March 17.)

Juarez (1939)—The time is the eighteen-sixties. Paul Muni is the straight, stern President of Mexico, with bowed, heavy shoulders and a rigid profile. Brian Aherne, in blond sideburns and chin whiskers, is the gentle, ineffectual Hapsburg Archduke Maximilian, who becomes a puppet Emperor, and Bette Davis, huge eyed and wearing a black wig, is the barren, doomed Empress Carlota. She looks both fragile and tempestuous, and gets a chance to show off her best violent spasms when she pleads for help at the Tuileries and frightens the Empress Eugénie (Gale Sondergaard, who doesn't frighten easy). It's a lumpy big movie; Muni's big-star solemn righteousness is like a dose of medicine. But there are incidental diversions: John Garfield, as Diaz, gives a blue-ribbon bad performance, and Claude Rains, Joseph Calleia, Gilbert Roland, Henry O'Neill, Donald Crisp, and Harry Davenport all stomp around in fancy costumes. William Dieterle directed. (Quad Cinema; starting March 23.)

Kennel Murder Case (1933)—One of the pleasanter films in the series starring the suave comedian William Powell as S. S. Van Dine's detective Philo Vance. The plot involves some lively Scotties and a handsome Doberman, as well as that sinister figure, the connoisseur of Oriental objects of art; in the thirties, Ming and murder always seemed to go together. Mary Astor, at an in-between stage in her career, has a conventional role that doesn't much suit her; however, most of the other players are cast so inevitably to type that the film is like a demonstration of the principles of running a stock company. The group includes snake-hipped Helen Vinson, wicked Jack La Rue, tedious Ralph Morgan, Paul Cavanaugh, Etienne Girardot, Robert Barrat, Eugene Pallette, Frank Conroy, Arthur Hohl, Henry O'Neill, and Robert McWade. Directed by Michael Curtiz. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 18-19.)

Lacombe, Lucien (1974)—About a boy who has an empty space where feelings beyond the purely instinctual are expected to be. The time is 1944, and the boy—a French peasant—goes to work each day hunting down and torturing people for the Gestapo. The director is Louis Malle. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; March 18.)

The Late Show—The writer-director, Robert Benton, has followed the rules of the detective-movie genre, but he's also added something: the detective (Art Carney) is overweight, old, and scared. Lily Tomlin is the woman who hires him; Eugene Roche is a fence who loves his stolen goodies; Bill Macy is a scrounging bartender; Joanna Cassidy is a lying, cheating charmer; Howard Duff is a penny-ante detective; and John Considine is a sleekly handsome strong-arm man. They're all originals. (2/7/77) (Sutton.)

Lenny (1974)—The earnest Bob Fosse film starring Dustin Hoffman is for audiences who want to believe that Lenny Bruce was a saintly gadfly who was martyred for having lived before their time. Hoffman makes a serious, honorable try, but he's the wrong kind of actor to play Bruce. Hoffman is a nice boy; Bruce was uncompromisingly not nice. Valerie Perrine is touching as Honey, and Gary Morton has a fine bit as the type of comic who knew how to keep his public happy. (Cinema Village; March 23-24.)

Lipstick—Smeared. With Margaux Hemingway and Chris Sarandon, directed by Lamont Johnson. (Olympia; through March 22. . . . ¶ Playboy; starting March 23.)

The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (1969)—A series of three sketches, each beginning on a magic-looking, red-swagged toy stage. The film was written and made by Renoir himself, with the director looming quizzically over the stage at the start of each episode as a sort of compere. Jeanne Moreau appears in a brief outburst of Belle Epoque soprano singing—an unexpected comedian. In French. (Paramount; March 21.)

Marathon Man—William Goldman's book—a visceral thriller about a Nazi ring of thieves in New York—seemed a lead-pipe cinch to make audiences almost sick with excitement (the way "The French Connection" did); it's "Death Wish" with a lone Jewish student (played by Dustin Hoffman) getting his own back from the Nazis. But the director, John Schlesinger, opts for so much frazzled cross-cutting that there isn't the clarity needed for suspense. The only emotion one is likely to feel is revulsion at the brutality and general unpleasantness. With Laurence Olivier, Roy Scheider, and Marthe Keller. (10/11/76) (72nd Street East, and Olympia; through March 22. . . . ¶ Playboy; starting March 23.)

Marked Woman (1937)—Bette Davis as a nightclub hostess in a story about protection, made by Lloyd Bacon. Davis has a fine scene of pegged-down fury on behalf of a fellow-hostess; she is always a sort of conduit to the most savage and primal emotions of women, and in this baddish film she has some big Hollywood/Ancient Greece emotions. Humphrey Bogart plays the man of probity, as an assistant district attorney. (Quad Cinema; March 16.)

Midnight Cowboy (1969)—Jon Voight as Joe Buck, the cowboy, and Dustin Hoffman as Ratso Rizzo—two lost, lonely men who find friendship. The John Schlesinger film is a brutal, superficial satire of America, but the actors take hold of one's emotions and one's imagination. From James Leo Herlihy's novel. (8th St. Playhouse; through March 22.)

Mr. Billion—With Terence Hill, Valerie Perrine, and Jackie Gleason; directed by Jonathan Kaplan. (Music Hall.)

Mr. Moto Takes a Vacation (1939)—There were nine of these ingratiating, mildly clever B-pictures starring Peter Lorre as the smiling, super-polite, super-smart Oriental detective. They were scheduled on the lower half of double bills, but were frequently the better half. This is the eighth of the batch; in this one he perceives, from an examination of footprints, that a man who pretends to be lame is only faking. Norman Foster directed; with Joseph Schildkraut, Lionel Atwill, and Virginia Field. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; March 21.)

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)—Frank Capra's attempt to repeat the country-boy-defeating-the-city-slickers formula of "Mr. Deeds" succeeded commercially, but this one has more of the heartfelt in it than is good for the stomach, and it goes on for *over* two hours. James Stewart is the naïve small-town hero sent to the Senate; Jean Arthur is the cynical young secretary who is at first horrified by his simplicity. Sidney Buchman wrote the screenplay, from a story by Lewis R. Foster. The cast includes Claude Rains as a corrupt senator, Guy Kibbee as a venal governor, Beulah Bondi as Ma Smith, Edward Arnold, Thomas Mitchell, Ruth Donnelly, and Eugene Pallette, who gets stuck in a phone booth. (Regency; starting March 24.)

Mohammad, Messenger of God—With Anthony Quinn and Irene Papas, directed by Moustapha Akkad. (Columbia I, and Columbia II.)

The More the Merrier (1943)—Has a memorable funny love scene: the very proper office-worker heroine (Jean Arthur) reluctantly sits down on the front steps of her apartment building with the inventor-hero (Joel McCrea); they begin to neck, and she's embarrassed by what she feels. The film is set in Washington, D.C., during the Second World War; the housing shortage results in their becoming part of an innocent *ménage à trois* with Charles Coburn, an elderly businessman who enjoys playing Cupid. Directed by George Stevens, this hit comedy is lively and well paced, but the fun is too often forced, and Jean Arthur overdoes her adorably prim act. (Remade in 1966 as "Walk, Don't Run," with Cary Grant in the Coburn role.) (Regency; starting March 24.)

Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven—With Brigitte Mira, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. In German. (New Yorker.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24		

Nasty Habits—At its best, high wit and inspired silliness—it's a dream of a satire, reminiscent of Bea Lillie's brand of madness. Adapted from "The Abbess of Crewe," Muriel Spark's 1974 Watergate travesty set in a convent, the film features a coiffed little wolf pack—Glenda Jackson as Nixon, Geraldine Page and Anne Jackson as Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and, in an inspired bit of casting, Sandy Dennis as their flunky, John Dean. In her first real crack at screen farce, Dennis turns tactlessness and blurting into woozy slapstick; it's a blissful performance—she's such a drip she's creepy. As Kissinger, Melina Mercouri doesn't help much, but the scenarist, Robert Enders, has added a Gerald Ford figure—Anne Meara, who is such a brassy, good-humored top banana that everything she does is funny. The script tapers off toward topicality and obviousness, but Michael Lindsay-Hogg's directing has a balmy gracefulness to it. With Edith Evans. (2/21/77) (Cinema II; starting March 18.)

Network—Television, Paddy Chayefsky says, is turning us into morons and humanoids, people have lost the ability to love. The cast of this messianic farce includes Faye Dunaway, William Holden, Peter Finch, Robert Duvall, and Ned Beatty, and they all take turns yelling at us soulless masses. Sidney Lumet directed. (12/6/76) (59th St. Theatre, Trans-Lux 85th St., Greenwich, and Loews 83rd Triplex. . . . ¶ 34th St. East; through March 22.)

Now, Voyager (1942)—A campy modern tear-jerker variation on the Cinderella story: a psychiatrist (Claude Rains) enables the sexually repressed, neurotically dowdy Bostonian Charlotte Vale (Bette Davis) to become an attractive, confident woman. The scenarist, Casey Robinson, adapted the novel by Olive Higgins Prouty, the genius of kitsch who also wrote "Stella Dallas;" both novels are about the glories of female self-sacrifice. The score, by Max Steiner, aims right for the jugular; the director, Irving Rapper, is just barely competent, and the action plods along, yet this picture is all of a piece, and if it were better it might not work at all. This way, it's a crummy classic. With Gladys Cooper, Bonita Granville, Lee Patrick, Ilka Chase, Charles Drake, and Franklin Pangborn. (Quad Cinema; March 16.)

Obsession—An *hommage* to Hitchcock, made by Brian De Palma. The inspiring original is Hitchcock's "Vertigo," in which James Stewart is an ex-dick confused over whether Kim Novak is a suicide (as he thought) or is beguilingly alive in a new identity. "Obsession," which believes in mystery rather than in Hitchcock's surprises, is about a rich New Orleans businessman (Cliff Robertson), who suffers the kidnapping of his wife (Geneviève Bujold) and his nine-year-old daughter (Wanda Blackman). Years later, gray-haired, he falls in love, in Italy, with a girl restoring a painting in the Italian church where he first fell in love with his wife. The girl is played, of course, by Geneviève Bujold. Who is she? A hallucination? The question leaves us cold, because it lacks Hitchcock's scrupulous matter-of-factness. (8/2/76) (Loews Ciné; through March 17.)

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)—Smashingly effective version of Ken Kesey's novel about a rebel outcast (Jack Nicholson) who is locked in a hospital for the insane. Louise Fletcher is Nurse Ratched, and Will Sampson is Chief Broom. Miloš Forman's intelligent, tentative direction lacks the excitement of movie art, but the story and the acting make the film emotionally powerful. (12/1/75) (8th St. Playhouse; through March 22. . . . ¶ Cinema Village; March 23-24.)

Patton (1970)—George C. Scott in an epic that can be taken as the story of a maniac or of a great hero, depending on your point of view. Directed, in a handsome, almost imperial, style, by Franklin J. Schaffner. (Elgin; March 23.)

Payday (1973)—A fine film, too long neglected. Shot entirely on location in Alabama, it is an acrid, hardboiled melodrama with a feeling for authentic characters and details. An exceptionally functional script, by the novelist Don Carpenter, makes it possible for the director, Daryl Duke, to cover the grimy country-music scene of a small-time recording star—a goaty, rancidly unromantic third-rate Johnny Cash. Rip Torn, with his smirking satyr grin, will probably never have a role that suits him better. (Elgin; March 19.)

The Private Life of Don Juan (1934)—A relatively motionless Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in a rueful, satirical movie analogy to his then domestic problems. His Don Juan, past his heyday, is in his forties and has to watch his diet and sneak in a masseur. The story is about how he frees himself from the demands of philandering. It's one of those ideas that never really take off. With Merle Oberon and Benita Hume. Alexander Korda directed, and the picture features sumptuous Spanish costumes; some look cribbed from Goya. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 20-21.)

The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex (1939)—Bette Davis, well painted and dressed for the role of the shrewd old Queen, looks the part and gives a magnetic, tough performance, but an impossible task was set for her, since as Essex Errol Flynn couldn't come halfway to meet her. Michael Curtiz directed this adaptation of the Maxwell Anderson play. With Olivia de Havilland, Henry Daniell, Leo G. Carroll, James Stephenson, Vincent Price, Donald Crisp, and Ralph Forbes. Music is by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. (Quad Cinema; March 17-19.)

Providence—Alain Resnais's intricately planned Freudian-puzzle movie, mostly set inside the mind of a dying writer (John Gielgud). Alone at night, in pain, he drunkenly plots a novel about the members of his family (Dirk Bogarde, Ellen Burstyn, David Warner, Elaine Stritch). The movie is peculiarly fastidious and static. David Mercer wrote the script. (1/31/77) (Cinema 3.)

Pumping Iron—Competently made documentary about the grotesque, funny subculture of body-building. It holds the viewer's interest, but it does so by setting up the body-building champions for you to react to in a certain way, and then congratulating you for seeing them in that psychologically facile way. The directors, George Butler and Robert Fiore, treat Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mike Katz, Franco Columbu, and Louis Ferrigno and his parents as if they were fictional characters, and there are elements of presumption, cruelty, and condescension in this. The film never transcends its own slickness. (Plaza.)

Rocky—A low-budget winner—a romantic fable about a Philadelphia palooka who gains his manhood, written by and starring muscle-bound Sylvester Stallone, who is repulsive one moment, noble the next. The picture is poorly made, yet its naïve, emotional shamelessness is funny and engaging. John G. Avildsen directed; with Talia Shire, Carl Weathers, Burt Young, and Burgess Meredith. (11/29/76) (Gramercy, Eastside Cinema, R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 2, and Quad Cinema.)

La Salamandre (1971)—A Swiss film (made in French, with English subtitles), directed by Alain Tanner. There are three main characters: an imperishable little lizard of a girl called Rosemonde (Bulle Ogier); a huge-framed, goofy-looking journalist named Pierre, with a lopsided face and a hopeful view of life (Jean-Luc Bideau); and a low-key, lovable writer called Paul, with a lugubrious mustache like a Victorian bather's (Jacques Denis). (Art; through March 17.)

The Sentinel—With Chris Sarandon and Cristina Raines, directed by Michael Winner. (86th St. East. . . . ¶ Playboy; through March 22.)

Seven Beauties (1976)—Lina Wertmüller's Everyman jamboree, full of garbled ideas, cruelty, moist wistfulness, pious moralizing, and appeals to coarse prejudices. With Giancarlo Giannini. In Italian. (2/16/76) (Embassy 72nd St.; through March 22. . . . ¶ Guild; through March 22. The theatre will be closed all day on Sunday, March 20.)

Seven Chances (1925)—The plot gimmick—the hero must be married in a few hours in order to collect an inheritance—is an antique, and the play flopped on Broadway, but what Buster Keaton and his gag writers managed to do with the material will be everlastingly fresh.

When the news of the shy hero's need to wed is published in the papers, prospective brides arrive, singly at first and then in droves, and the distraught man, fleeing them, dislodges a boulder, which dislodges others, and soon he is pursued by hundreds of huge boulders. It's a lovely comedy, imaginatively—possibly faultlessly—directed by Keaton. With Snitz Edwards and Ruth Dwyer. (Bleecker St. Cinema; March 22.)

Silver Streak—Jill Clayburgh, Gene Wilder, and Richard Pryor are nineteen-seventies performers trapped in this fake thirties mystery-comedy, which is so inept you can't even get angry: it's like the imitations of sophisticated entertainment that high-school kids put on. Arthur Hiller directed, lamely; Colin Higgins wrote the script, which features pathetic double-entendres. (1/17/77) (Trans-Lux East, and R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1.)

Slap Shot—Fast, noisy, profane comedy set in the world of minor-league ice hockey. The director, George Roy Hill, gets you laughing, all right, but you don't necessarily enjoy yourself; the picture is geared to giving the public "what it wants"—and there's an antagonistic feeling behind it. What holds the film together is the warmth supplied by Paul Newman, who, as Reggie, a player-coach, gives the performance of his life—to date. (3/7/77) (Murray Hill, and Beekman.)

The Son of Monte Cristo (1940)—The plight of the Balkan Grand Duchess (Joan Bennett), with the swordplay by Louis (crooked smile) Hayward and George Sanders. Roland V. Lee directed the traffic in the secret passageways. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 20-21.)

The Sorrow and the Pity (1970)—Magnificent documentary epic on the German Occupation of France. A study in the psychology of history, directed by Marcel Ophuls. Four and a half hours. (Cinema Village; March 22.)

A Star Is Born—The Streisand-Kristofferson musical version—sentimental, without being convincing for an instant. Those in the mood for an emotional extravaganza can swoon and weep, and giggle, too. Directed by Frank Pierson. (1/10/77) (U. A. East, and Loews 83rd Triplex.)

Swept Away (1975)—Lina Wertmüller's Marxist story of a wealthy, industry-upheld bitch on a yacht who finds herself marooned in a state of heavily erotic political masochism. Her partner is the very sailor whom she has been abusing for marine inefficiency and the wearing of stinking T-shirts. In Italian. (9/22/75) (Embassy 72nd St.; through March 22. . . . ¶ Guild; through March 22. The theatre will be closed all day on Sunday, March 20.)

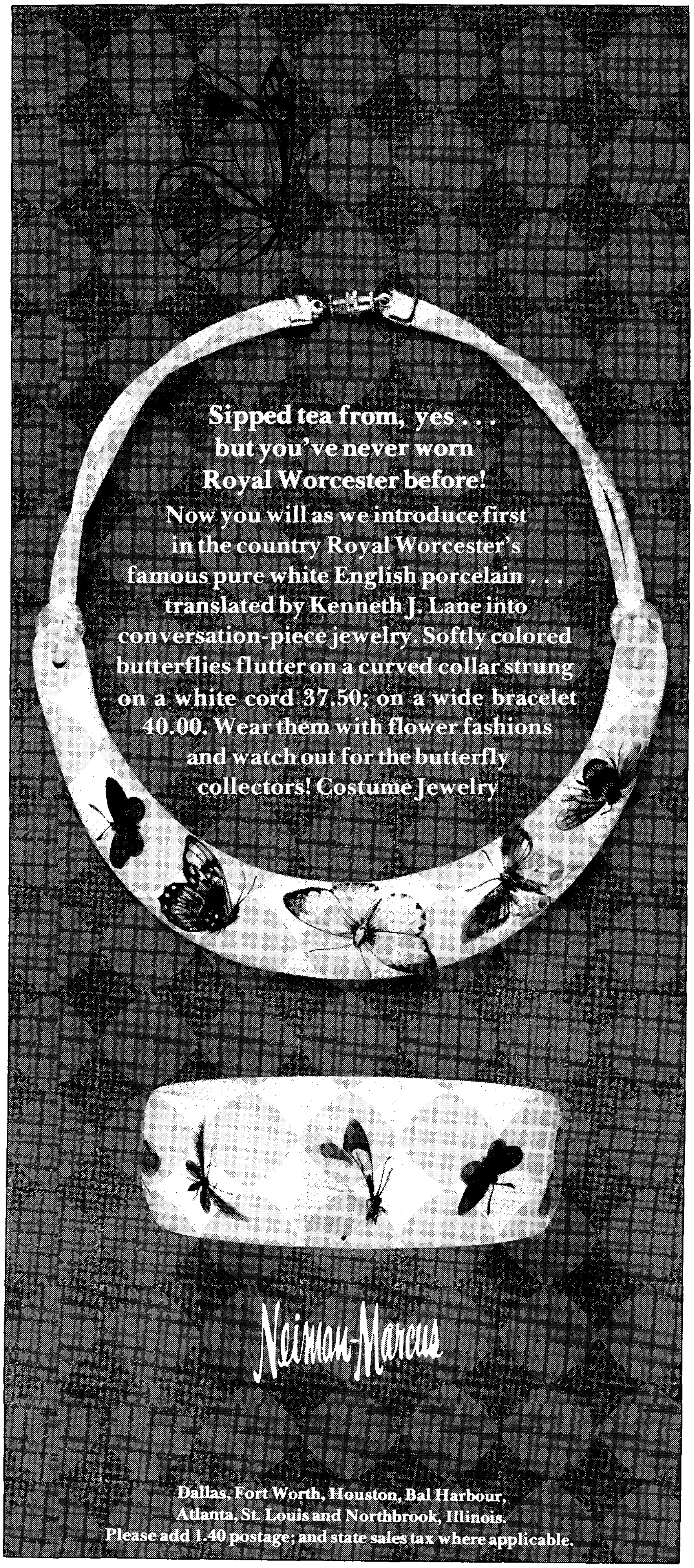
Taxi Driver (1976)—Robert De Niro stars in Martin Scorsese's feverish, horrifyingly funny movie about a lonely New York cabdriver, which is like a raw, tabloid version of "Notes from Underground." Be prepared: it's extraordinarily powerful. Paul Schrader wrote the script; with Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, Jodie Foster, Peter Boyle, and Albert Brooks. (2/9/76) (Loews Ciné; through March 17.)

Thieves—New York ghetto schoolteacher Marlo Thomas lectures her sell-out husband, Charles Grodin, about the glories of a mad, carefree existence—with full dedication to the underprivileged. The author, Herb Gardner (he also took over the direction from John Berry), specializes in the urban poetry of craziness; the characters don't talk—they make speeches, every one of them profound. Not a believable minute. (2/28/77) (Loews 83rd Triplex.)

Voyage of the Damned—This movie is based on the actual 1939 voyage of the S.S. St. Louis with nine hundred and thirty-seven German-Jewish refugees aboard, yet there is not a single moment in the star-packed epic that carries any conviction. As the ship's captain, Max von Sydow acts with some distinction; most of the others—Oskar Werner, Malcolm McDowell, Katharine Ross, Janet Suzman, Maria Schell, Victor Spinetti, Julie Harris, Wendy Hiller, Orson Welles, James Mason, et al.—are crippled by the banal lines, written by Steve Shagan and David Butler, and the atrocious direction of Stuart Rosenberg. (Fine Arts, and Waverly.)

Welcome to L.A.—With Keith Carradine, Sally Kellerman, Geraldine Chaplin, and Harvey Keitel; directed by Alan Rudolph. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Baronet.)

The Wonderful Crook—With Gérard Depardieu and Marlène Jobert, directed by Claude Goretta. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (68th St. Playhouse.)



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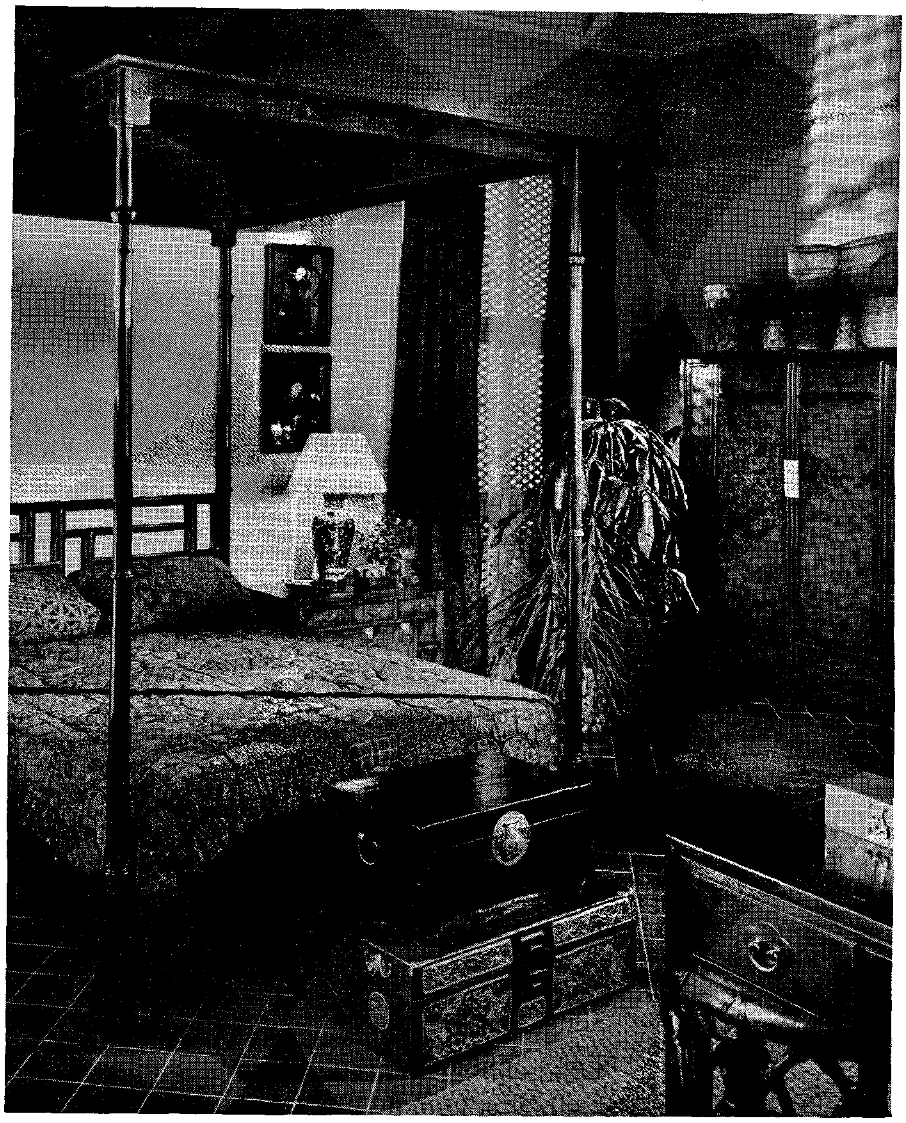

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THERE is a magazine published in Santa Barbara, California, called *Skeptic: The Magazine of Opposing Views.* Actually, *Skeptic* spells its name with a "?" instead of a "p"—*Ske?tic*—to suggest intellectual curiosity. *Ske?tic* has an interesting angle on the problem of how to decide which ideas are worth paying attention to. *Ske?tic's* angle is explained in a direct-mail brochure, whose cover bears the bold headline, in red on black, "20 UNPOPULAR IDEAS (and a few words about the popular new magazine that isn't afraid of them)." The twenty unpopular ideas—identified inside the brochure as "propositions put forth recently" in *Ske?tic*—include "Drug offenders should be lined up against the wall and shot" and "There is a right time to torture." Most of the rest of the twenty unpopular ideas are arguments for the status quo, such as "The notion that the Earth is running low on essential resources is a dangerous hoax," "Greed is as American as apple pie; without it, our economy would be dead," and "It serves no purpose to further investigate the shooting of Martin Luther King." You could say that these unpopular ideas deserve to remain unpopular, because they are retrograde drivel; that the editors of *Ske?tic* might find something better to do than looking for someone who will come out for torture; and that the "?" in *Ske?tic* stands less for intellectual curiosity than for the questionable current tendency to give people moral points for saying perverse things, as if saying perverse things took some sort of courage. You could say all that. But maybe the problem with *Ske?tic's* angle on ideas is simply that it is not precise enough. Classifying an idea as "popular" or "unpopular" results in a measurement of its worth that is perhaps too gross a measurement. Classifications are needed that will cut a little finer. The high-school-yearbook classification model, for instance, looks promising, for it could be used to place individual ideas in highly specific areas of popularity:

Most Pep: Drug offenders should be lined up against the wall and shot.

Nicest Eyes: Each of us has unused potential.

Best Athlete: Your mother never loved you.

Best Dancer: Yes, but even if we could get them, we wouldn't be able to train them fast enough.

Best Groomed: It was only a simulated attack with simulant germs.

Most Studious: Patent-leather shoes for women are appropriate only from Palm Sunday to Labor Day.

Sexiest: Myth is alibi.

Most Flair: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's brain is controlled by waves emanating from a higher civilization situated somewhere in the Horsehead Nebula.

Best-Looking:

1
1 1
1 2 1
1 3 3 1
1 4 6 4 1
1 5 10 10 5 1
1 6 15 20 15 6 1
1 7 21 35 35 21 7 1
1 8 28 56 70 56 28 8 1

Best Dresser: No; let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp/ And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee/ Where thrift may follow fawning.

Most Likely to Succeed: There is a right time to torture.

• •

Cab Story

"ARE you waiting for a cab? I'll split a cab with you. Taxi!"

We recognized the voice and followed it into the cab. It was Janet.

"I do this all the time," she said. "A lot of people in my situation drink or kill themselves. I talk to strangers. A cabdriver once said to me, 'You're the most beautiful, intelligent woman I rode in my cab all day.' Am I right or wrong?" Janet added, "I wouldn't feel so bad if I could read."

Then Janet asked the driver, "What do you think of Carter? I'll tell you what I think first."

"Where to?" said the driver.

She told him and turned to us. "I think the Carter Administration needs me," she said. "Jimmy Carter believes in everything I believe in. We're both against man's inhumanity to man. Don't I know you?"

We said yes.

"A cabdriver once asked me if he could use my bathroom," she went on. "Or maybe I asked him. I always worry about where cabdrivers go to the bathroom. Anyhow, I said certainly, and he parked his cab, took all his money, and came upstairs and used the bathroom. When he came out, he was furious. He said, 'How could you let a perfect stranger into your apartment? I might have killed you.' Which I thought was ungrateful. Another time— Wait a minute—where are *you* going?"

We said we had just been waiting to cross the street.

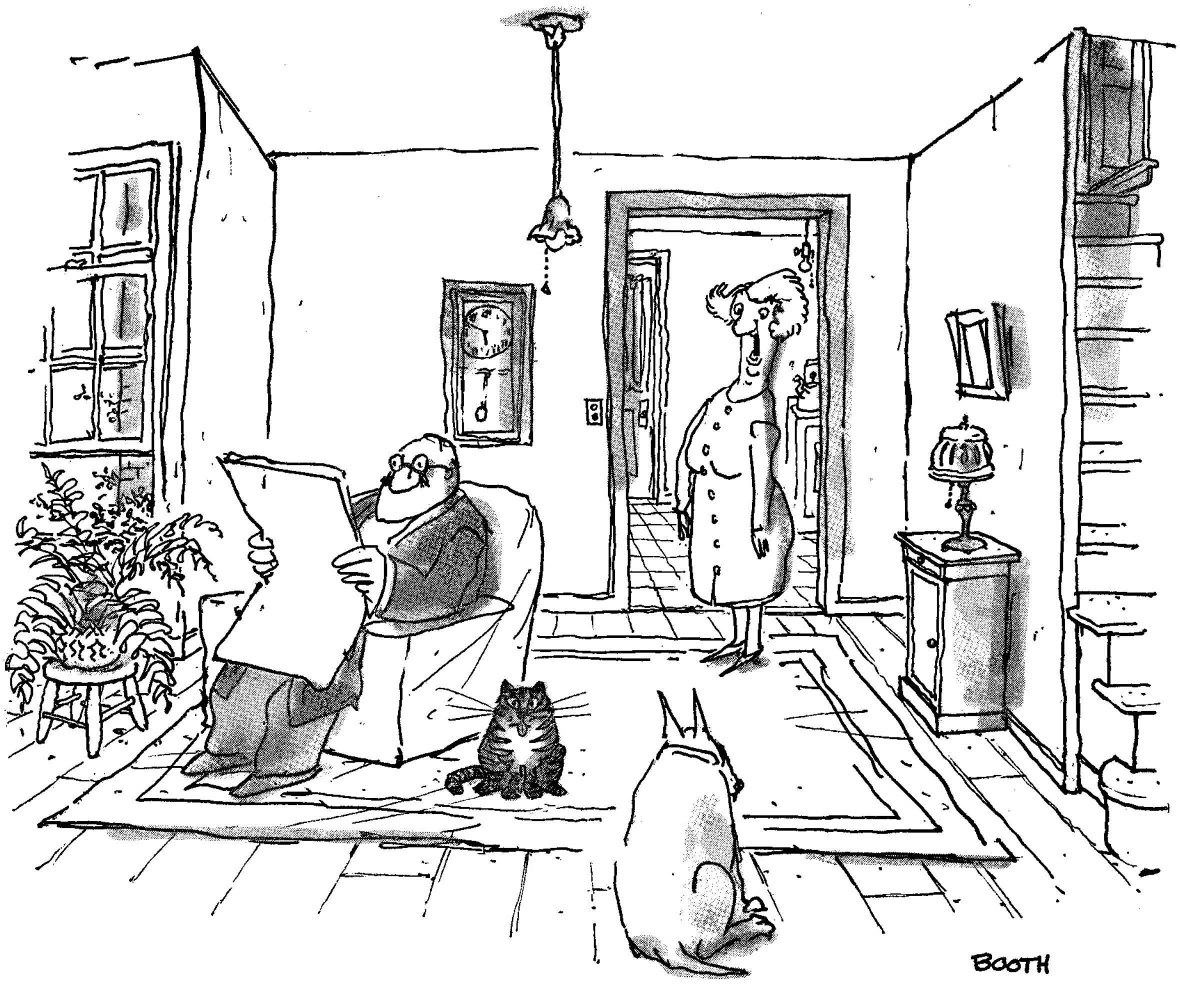
"Oh," said Janet. "Would you like to use my bathroom?"

We looked at our watch.

"Another time," Janet continued, as the taxi veered around Columbus Circle, "the guy driving the cab was in the secondhand-furniture business, and the guy I was sharing the cab with wanted a desk. They both came up and had a drink and then they went off together. I expect to hear from them. Remember when the fare changed?"

We said yes.

"Well, a few years ago, before the fare changed, the owners fixed it so that when you sat on the seat the meter started. So I gave the driver my address and I said, 'I'm just going to lie on



"Are they still fighting organized crime or have they decided to let it alone?"

the floor and I'll give you two dollars when we get there,' and he said, 'As you wish.' He was very polite. That's what got me nervous. I kept peeking up to see whether he was driving me to a police station to turn me in. All of a sudden, two men in an unmarked car pulled us over to the curb, and I thought they were going to arrest both of us, so I spilled my purse out all over the floor and I told them I had dropped my purse. They happened to be two detectives, and when they saw a head pop up they thought it was a holdup. The next morning, I was lying down in the bottom of a cab again and the driver said, 'My partner told me about you.' It was the same cab. I'll tell you one thing—"

We looked interested.

"I don't know about other people," she said, "but I can't believe how old I am. I can't believe it. Who's that guy that comes for you? The Big Reaper? I thought I had forty-two years to live, and I just found out I have twenty-two. The real dilemma is whether you should look back at all the mistakes you made or look forward and think of all the mistakes you're going to make. I would write my autobiography if I could remember anything. That's the title of my book—'I Can't Remember My Memoirs.' I can't remember anything anymore except a song called 'One Piece of Baloney' my brother Johnny played at Morristown High School." Janet hummed faintly.

"I'm also an inch shorter," she said. "That's the worst thing. Shrinking is certainly not a sign of progress. I *do* think it's too late for me to go to Jack LaLanne's. The super's wife told me that if I would go take out a membership at Jack LaLanne's she would get a three-month membership for nothing. So I go over there and plunk down eighty-nine dollars and ten cents. I went to Women's Day and I did everything once. I pulled a weight down instead of up. I rode a bicycle—you ride a bicycle for an hour and a half and stay in the same place—and I went into the sauna. It was very depressing and hot. I asked all these women how long they'd been going there, and they'd all been doing it for two years and still looked worse than me. There's a Miss Bell who keeps calling me up and asking for the other half of the membership fee, and I tell her that my doctor says that my bad back got worse, and she says to send in a note from my doctor. He sent me the note, but I lost it somewhere in my house."

Janet's voice trailed off for a moment.

"I'd still rather have my face lifted," she said. "Almost everything on me could be lifted except my right arch." She bent down and took off her right boot. "Look at that arch," she said. "Isn't it great?"

We said yes.

While Janet put her boot back on, we paid the cabdriver.

"Where are we?" Janet asked. "I hope the elevator is working. Did I tell you I went to Roseland?"

We said no.

"I was at the musicians union, on Fifty-second Street," she said, "and I heard this wild rumba music. I paid three-fifty and danced all afternoon. One guy said, 'I'll buy you a drink—but just one.' I think a lot of them were retired cooks. That same night, I went to '21' for dinner." She stepped off the elevator. "They're crazy about me at '21.' Every time I go there, no matter with who, they say 'Where's Joe?' or 'How's Joe?' Joe is not a cabdriver."

The telephone was ringing when we got to the door of Janet's apartment. She inserted her key in the lock and threw her weight against the door to open it.

"My other problem, by the way, is that the phone rings all the time, and when I answer it someone always says, 'Remember me? I'm your cabdriver.' But, seeing as I've given my number to every single cabdriver in New York . . ."

Janet paused. The phone stopped ringing.

"At nine o'clock on Tuesday morning," she said, "the phone rings and this very disagreeable man's voice says— Well, I can't repeat it, even if I *do* know you. But it suddenly occurred to me that this was an obscene phone call. 'I don't want to be rude,' I said, 'but are you someone I know?' And the voice said, 'Remember Venice?' Sometimes people I know call me."

The phone rang.

"That's either Murray or Harold," Janet said, reaching for the phone. "Oh, hi, Ron. Ron? Listen, I'll talk to you tomorrow morning. I can't talk to you anymore." She hung up.

"I *would* like to be Mrs. Carter," she said. "Do you notice how these beads match my pants and bring the whole thing together?"

We said yes.

"I'm embarrassed to tell you that I'm carrying a torch now for two guys at the same time. One got married and the other may want five Catholic children. Religion might help, but I'm not religious. I went to a Muslim wedding, and a ninety-five-year-old imam said that Christians were responsible for eighty-nine per cent of all the evil in the world, looking straight at me. Fortunately, I remembered I was Jewish, but I don't know what to do about that."

The phone rang again.

"Oh, Murray," Janet said. "I thought you were Harold. . . . I don't know any Harold. . . . Oh yes, Columbus. . . . Madison? Now I know who you are. . . . Well, I must have met Harold, too. I can't have someone call me I haven't met. . . . My God, a perfect stranger bought me a yogurt? . . . Yes, yes, I know who you are. Can I call you back?"

Janet hung up. "That was Murray," she explained. "He wants a party at my house—just the two of us. He goes to the New School and he always calls me from a phone booth."

Then she asked us, "Did we meet at the New School?"

We said no.

"Years ago," Janet said, "I got into a cab and when he got to where I lived I said, 'Quick, go around the corner. I don't want my husband to see me. He's a musician, and we can't afford cabs.' And the driver said, 'So you finally hooked the guy.' It turned out I had once been in his cab talking about this musician I wanted to marry who was in Paris living with someone else. Margaret Mead is probably secure. And Joan Crawford. I once read an article in one of those movie magazines in which she told all her faults. 'I am too sincere, I am too generous to my friends . . .' My faults run along those lines. Actually, I like my faults. It's everything else I want to change. I've done everything backwards. I had straight teeth; now they're crooked. I used to be able to breathe; then I had half my nose chopped off so I could be an actress. I was young; now I'm old. I was rich; now I'm poor. That's my worst fault. If I were rich now, I'd be considered a lovable eccentric."

The phone rang, and Janet answered it. "Are you someone I know?" she said.

Default

FOR the past two and a half years, we have had the chance to read and hear a great deal about something ominous called "default." Until now, default has not occurred because—and we now know the lexicon of this sort of news story far better than we care to—*top city officials*, whose backs must be very sore from *huddling with representatives of the major banks* as well as assorted *financial watchdogs*, have put forth *proposals and counterproposals* to try to *piece together a package* to make up the *shortfall* in revenues that threatens to tumble us into *default*. These terms dwell fresh in the mind, of course, because during the past few weeks we have once again witnessed a circus of last-minute heroics aimed at—and this is our favorite cliché—saving the city's *fiscal health*.

There are probably a few people, numb from all this phrasemongering, who wouldn't mind seeing the suspense ended and getting an up-close look at actual default. From what we know—and because we have never seen default here, we rely upon inference—these people are asking for trouble. In the simplest terms, default would happen if the City of New York failed to satisfy its debts as they came due. It would mean that the city had gone broke, and life around here in the aftermath would be a pain and a mess for a very long time. If default did occur, clearing it up would require what is known in legal argot as a "readjustment of debt." This prodigiously antiseptic term describes a situation in which all of the city's creditors—bondholders, employees who demand to be paid for work they have done, businesses that supply the city with materials and services, the lawyers who represent all these creditors in their suits against the city, just to name a few of the parties involved—would line up and ask a federal court to help them get the money that they have coming. At first, they would line up figuratively, by filing claims. If eventually enough people decided that they did not like the city's proposals for settling the debts, they might very well line up literally, and when they did it would take a big room to hold all of them. A room, in fact, would not do. Neither would Madison Square Garden. Shea Stadium should suffice. It would be a gigantic town meeting, a comic hor-

ror. It would be democracy at its worst.

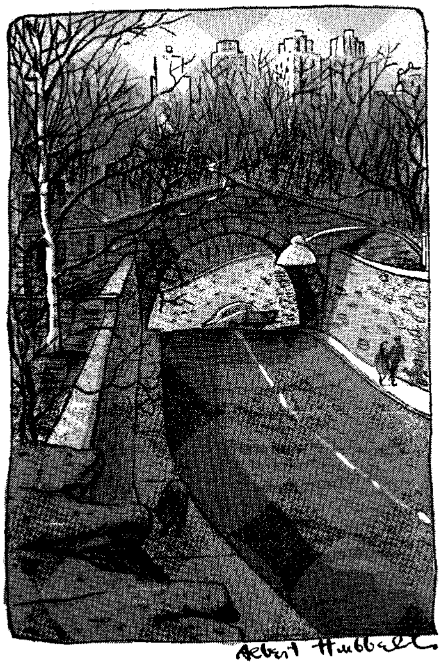
During the time that the creditors waited for their claims to be settled, some of them would die, because the litigation involved in a readjustment of debt would last years and years. No doubt some of the creditors would, in turn, be sued by the city. For instance, a stationery manufacturer who had supplied the city with letterheads and envelopes for which he had never been paid might decide, when it came time for him to pay his city real-estate or income taxes, that he just didn't feel like doing it. A city employee waiting to receive an overdue salary check might decide not to pay *his* taxes, not to pay a parking ticket, not to show up for work. Bad faith would abound.

These varieties of anarchy, big-time and small-time, would not take place in a legal vacuum. There is, in fact, a relatively fresh canon of federal law—specifically, Chapter IX of the Bankruptcy Act—which establishes procedures for handling a default. This legislation came into being a year ago, and before Congress adopted it—the early drafts of the law, by the way, were written by lawyers from New York—no one could say very accurately what a municipal default would look like. In administrative terms, it seemed to be some sort of unwieldy spectre. Now, thanks to the new law, a clearer definition of the mechanism exists. It sets down the terms by which legal theory's proverbial "reasonable and prudent" men might behave. Ironically, the law appears to have defined the terms so well that now reasonable and prudent men banish the thought of testing the mechanism to see how well it operates.

Harrison J. Goldin, the city Comptroller, was in a quotable mood when we went to see him the other day and asked him to describe his vision of default. At one point, he said that describing default "is like describing what death feels like." He added that he considers himself the "fiduciary for seven million souls." He also said that the larger consequences of default would cause corporations that do business here to dash out of town. In particular, foreign corporations that have invested in franchises here would move elsewhere. This mass exodus of capital from the city could lead ultimately, he believes, to a shift away from New York as the financial capital of the world—a shift that would be less likely to move that locus to Houston or Chicago than to another country entirely. In our conversation, Mr. Goldin mentioned the word "bankruptcy" several times, and we pointed out that the words "default" and "bankruptcy" do not appear in Chapter IX of the Bankruptcy Act. We raised this semantic distinction on behalf of the point of view that says that default can be defined in many ways. This argument holds that when the city began, more than two years ago, to do such things as reduce the size of the municipal labor force, to fire policemen and firemen, to abolish free tuition at City University, and to institute a moratorium on the repayment of certain debts, it was, in effect, entering upon a kind of default. Others contend that inasmuch as bankruptcy is a liquidation proceeding and the city cannot very well sell off its subways, streets, parks, and bridges, the city cannot "declare bankruptcy." But this is rather sophisticated stuff, and we prefer to think of these abstractions as ones that lose their force in the face of a *real* default. "Default" is, upon contemplation, an awfully strong word—so strong, in fact, that we'd like to believe that an actual default certainly won't happen here. Just as certainly, however, we will continue to hear catch phrases like *brinksmanship* and *eleventh hour.* But it must be a worthwhile tradeoff. The litany of chosen worn phrases, grating as it might be, somehow succeeds in keeping reality at a safe distance.

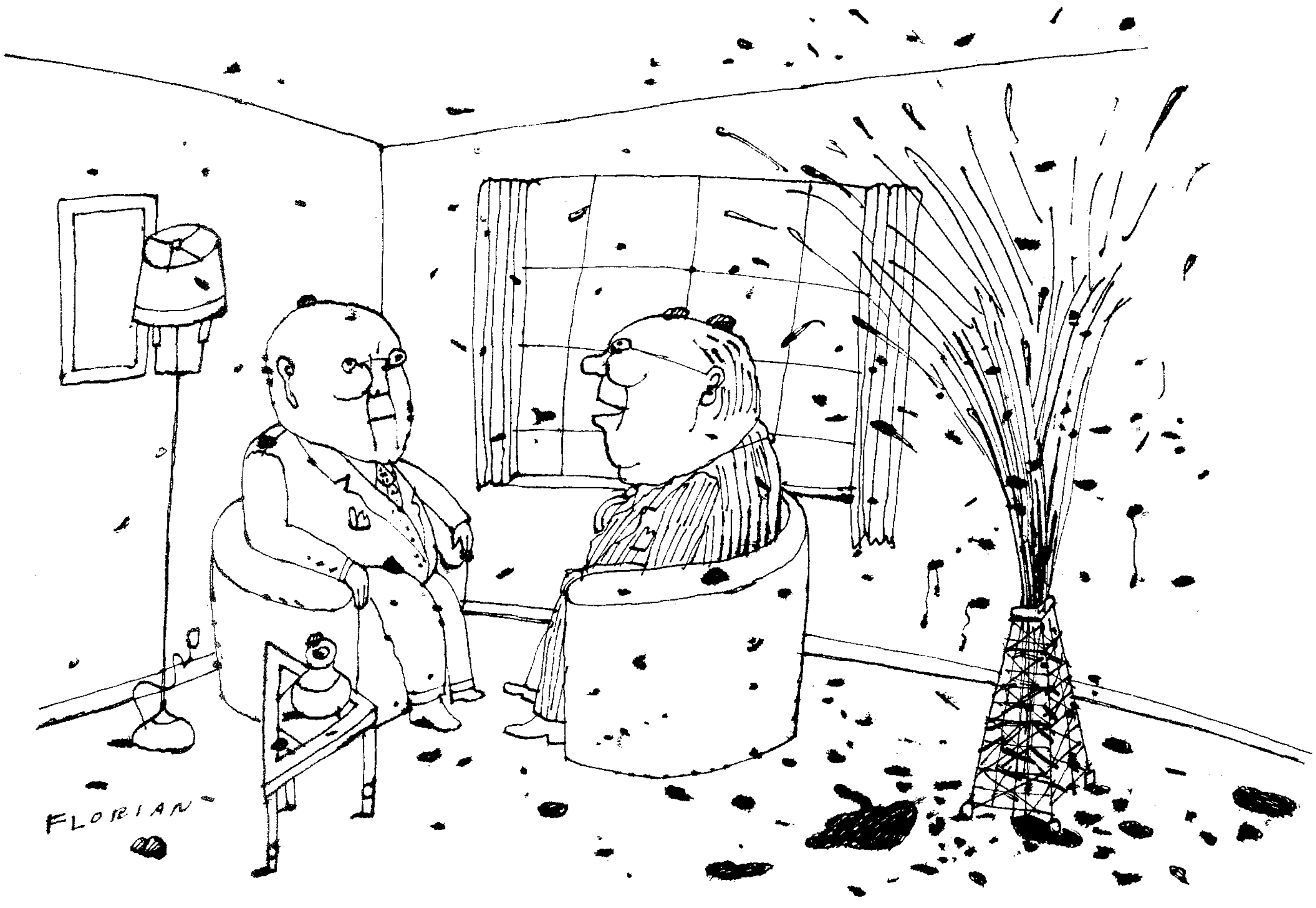
The Royal Pavilion

LOOKING, if we do say so, our most Beau Brummellish, we sallied forth last week to the opening of the exhibition devoted to the exotic seaside palace that is the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, up at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. On our arm we had an old friend of ours who has long been interested in the Regency—the building's period. She herself had made some stylish efforts in honor of the occasion, and was wearing one of our favorites from her hat collection—the black one with ostrich feathers, which once belonged to Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge. When we arrived, people were milling about and sipping wine in the foyer of the old Carnegie mansion, and a duo of Romany minstrels was fiddling away among the potted palms. We swept on up the Renaissance grand staircase, to where the crowd was thinnest and the exhibition—furniture, decorative objects, architectural drawings, sketches—at its most spectacular. As we approached a gallery of furniture and decorations, our friend reminded us that the inside of the folly commissioned by the Prince of Wales who became Prince Regent and later George IV is fully as extravagant and fanciful as the outside. (Before-the-fact pictorial suggestions by the designers of the interior, the firm of Frederick Crace, and engravings of the completed work made by the architect, John Nash, form an important part of the exhibition.) "The outside, with all those onion-shaped domes and mad minarets and wedding-cake frills, is some sort of hallucination of the Hindustani," our friend added. "But the inside is mostly a freewheeling dream of Chinoiserie."



We stood before some of the pieces brought from Brighton for the show, and we heard our friend draw in her breath. Here was a veritable treasure trove of color and refinement—of coral and rose, cobalt and sea green, and sparkling, sunlit yellow. Throughout, there was the golden gleam of ormolu and leafing. Here was all that wealth and craft could make of porcelain and lacquerwork and of ivory, sandalwood, and bamboo. Here were zany tasselled Chinese lanterns and a gasolier with a shade like a fritillary next to mustachioed porcelain mandarins and delicate ladies smiling away behind their gilded fans. Serpents twined their scaly tails round columns, dragons unfurled their fiery breath across satinwood panelling, and tropical birds in antique wallpapers perched on the writhing painted boughs of their perennial spring.

We descended to the cooling green in the museum's Tiffany conservatory and sat down to rest on a cast-iron bench. A marble bust of the royal collector looked down on us with a chilly eye.



"It's a mixed blessing."

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"Some of the pieces have been lent by the Queen from her private collection," we said. (We had been put in charge of perusing the catalogue while our friend recovered from a sort of daze.) "It says the place was stripped after George and his brother had popped off. The furniture was all carted away to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, and the pavilion was sold off to the town of Brighton."

"One couldn't expect those old Victorians to respect the passionate commitment to fantasy the Prince Regent had," our friend said, sparked with indignation. "The pavilion is a pleasure dome, and a dandy's dream. It's no coincidence that the people who spoke up for Brighton were dandies, like Max Beerbohm and Osbert Sitwell, while the anti-dandy types have always seen fit to sneer. The place may seem a little eccentric, but the Prince was a man of dazzling and discerning taste, and there is a sort of unity of style. He loved wit and wine and women, and he and his pavilion made Regency Brighton the most fashionable resort in the world."

We sat watching the crowd stroll past us and toward a giant sunflower head of carved and gilded wood—one of the wall decorations from the pavilion's saloon. It was a vibrant piece of work, and a girl with a childlike, close-cropped head parted her red lips and lifted a hand to her cheek at the sight. Lee Radziwill came past on the arm of her escort, and the couple were moving at such a businesslike lick that they looked like mechanical toys on wheels. A gray-haired man in a vested suit was in loud dispute with his wife. "It's a fantasy thing," she was explaining. "It's not supposed to be something you *relate* to." "Look, honey," he said firmly, "all this stuff has been duplicated in plastic down in Chinatown. If you ask me, the Queen could have a heck of a garage sale."

We moved back into the exhibition, and stepped up to an ornate pair of red lacquer doors—one of several such pairs made for the pavilion's music room, the opulent, encrusted chamber that is the house's tour de force. The crimson lacquer was mixed with particles of sparkling dust that caught the light, and there were decorations of crossed rococo woodwind instruments. The pagodalike canopy above the doors was topped with dragons and horned golden monsters, grinning down at us like Cheshire cats, and it dripped with a line of spindlelike Hindu adornments. We turned our gaze to the left of the razzle-dazzle of the doors themselves and inspected a series of watercolor sketches of them, got up by the designers at Crace for the Prince's approval before the doors were made. To the right of the doors hung an aquatint of the completed room, done by the artist Count Augustus Pugin for the firm of John Nash. There the doors were again, in the Pugin version, and a musical evening was being enacted before them, with all the room's great blossomlike chandeliers ablaze. The Prince's favorite orchestra was playing, and dancers were stepping out toward each other in a minuet. We drew closer, to where we could pick out what appeared to be the diminutive figure of the Prince on a sofa, overseeing all his hothouse splendors with the amply bosomed Mrs. Fitzherbert by his side. Our eye was drawn still deeper in, down into his brilliant dream. We half expected the dancers to set off in magic-lantern motion while the Regent burst (as was his wont at home) into a snatch of after-dinner song.

MY MAO

> "Kay, would you like a dog? . . ." Ike asked.
> "Would I? Oh, General, having a dog would be heaven!"
> "Well," he grinned, "if you want one, we'll get one."
> —"*Past Forgetting: My Love Affair with Dwight D. Eisenhower.*"
>
> "I don't want you to be alone," he said after a while.
> "I'm used to it."
> "No, I want you to have a dog."
> —"*A Loving Gentleman: The Love Story of William Faulkner and Meta Carpenter.*"

WHY this reminiscence, this public straining of noodles in the colander of memory? The Chairman despised loose talk. Each time we parted, he would seal my lips together with spirit gum and whisper, "Mum for Mao." During our ten-year relationship, we quarrelled only once—when I managed to dissolve the spirit gum with nail-polish remover and told my best friend about us, and it got back to a relative of the Chairman's in Mongolia. These things happen; somebody always knows somebody. But for one month the Chairman kept up a punishing silence, even though we had agreed to write each other daily when it was not possible to be together. Finally, he cabled this directive: "ANGRILY ATTACK THE CRIMES OF SILLY BLABBERMOUTHS." I knew then that I was forgiven; his love ever wore the tailored gray uniform of instruction.

Until now, writing a book about this well-known man has been the farthest thing from my mind—except perhaps for writing a book about someone else. I lacked shirts with cuffs to jot memorandums on when he left the room. I was innocent of boudoir electronics. I failed even to record the dates of his secret visits to this country (though I am now free to disclose that these visits were in connection with very important official paperwork and high-powered meetings). But how can I hide while other women publish? Even my friends are at it. Fran is writing "Konnie!: Adenauer in Love." Penny and Harriet are collaborating on "Yalta Groupies." And my Great-Aunt Jackie has just received a six-figure advance for " 'Bill' of Particulars: An Intimate Memoir of William Dean Howells." Continued silence on my part would only lead to speculation that Mao alone among the greatest men of the century could not command a literate young mistress.

That this role was to be mine I could scarcely have foreseen until I met him in 1966. He, after all, was a head of state, I a mere spangle on the midriff of the American republic. But you never know what will happen, and then it is not possible to remember it until it has already happened. That is the way things were with our first encounter. Only now that it is past can I look back upon it. Now I can truly see the details of the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, with its many halls and doors, its carpeted Grand Suite. I can feel the static electricity generated by my cheap nylon waitress's dress, the warmth of the silver tray on which I hoisted a selection of pigs-in-blankets.

Chairman Mao was alone. He sat in the center of the room, in an upholstered armchair—a man who looked as if he might know something I didn't. He was round, placid, smooth as a cheese. When I bent over him with the hors d'oeuvres, he said in perfect English but with the mid-back-rounded vowels pitched in the typical sharps and flats of Shaoshan, "Will you have a bite to eat with me?"

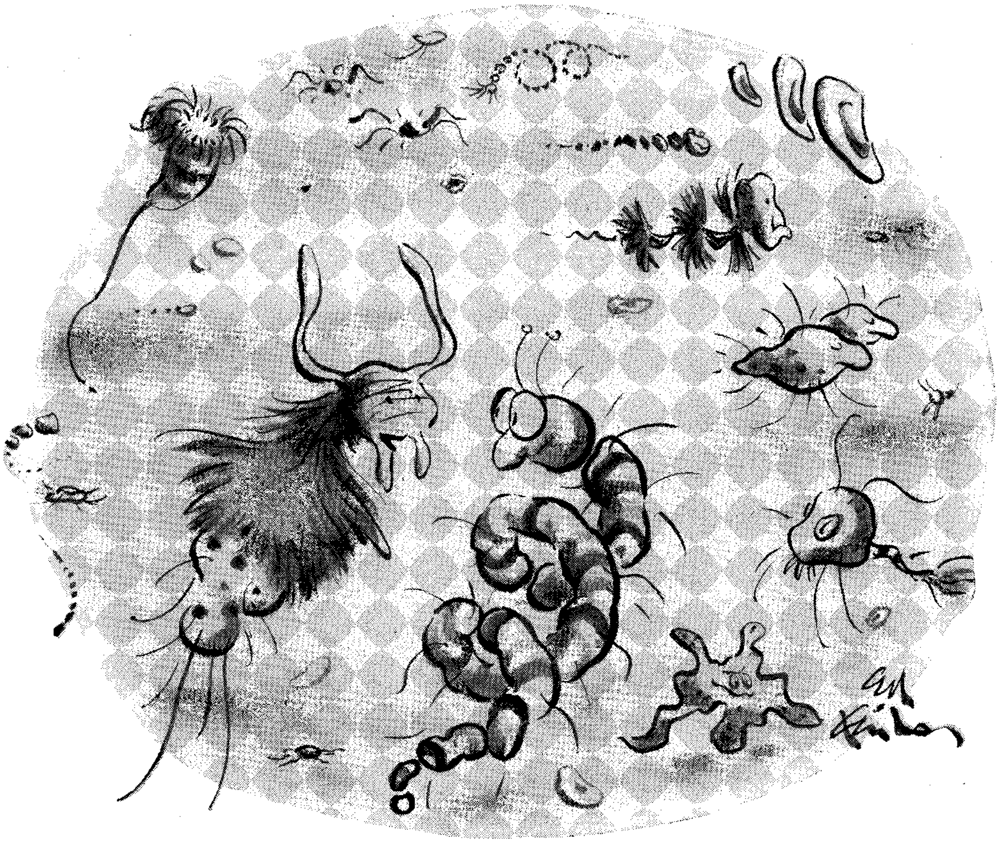
"No," I said. In those days, I never said yes to anything. I was holding out for something better than what everybody had.

He closed his eyes.

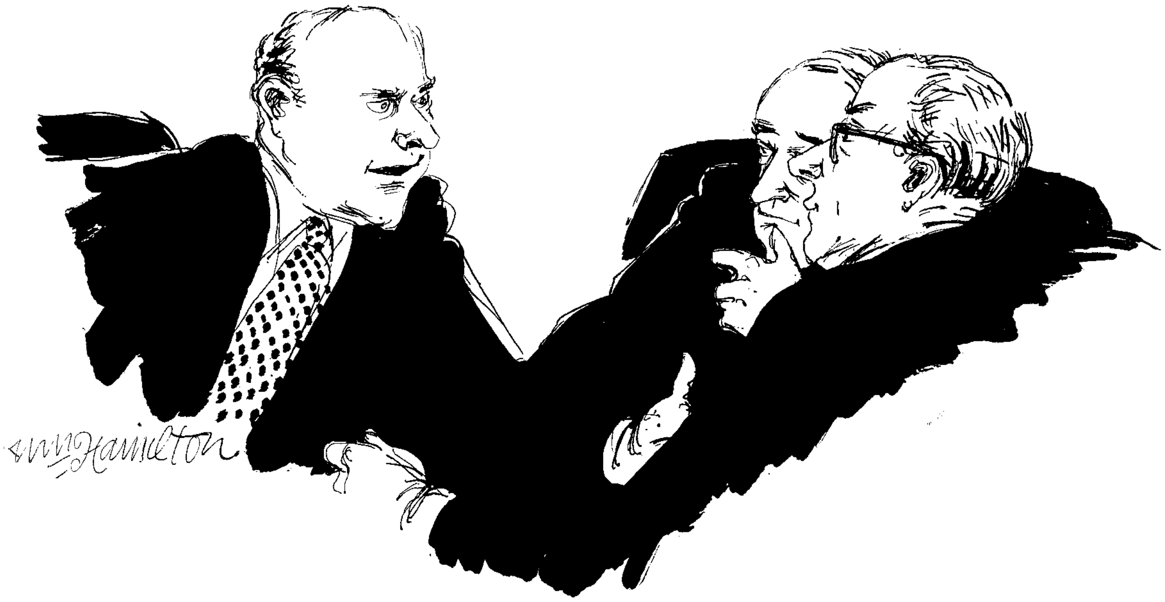
By means of that tiny, almost impatient gesture, he had hinted that my way of life was wrong.

I felt shamed, yet oddly exhilarated by the reproof. That night I turned down an invitation to go dancing with a suture salesman who gamely tried to date me once in a while. In some way I could not yet grasp, the Chairman had renewed my sense of possibility, and I just wanted to stay home.

ONE evening about six months later, there was a knock at my door. It was the Chairman, cheerful on rice wine. With his famous economy of expression, he embraced me and taught me the Ten Right Rules of Lovemaking: Reconnoitre, Recruit, Relax, Recline, Relate, Reciprocate, Rejoice, Recover, Reflect, and Retire. I was surprised by his ardor, for I knew the talk that he had been incapacitated by a back injury in the Great Leap Forward. In truth, his spine was supple as a peony stalk. The only difficulty was that it was sensitive to certain kinds of pressure. A few times he was moved to remind me,



"*We're living in a sick society, thank goodness.*"



"I mean, you can have the cleanest air in the world but if you can't manufacture anything what the hell good is it?"

• •

"Please, don't squeeze the Chairman."

When I awoke the next morning, he was sitting up in bed with his eyes closed. I asked him if he was thinking. "Yes," he said, without opening his eyes. I was beginning to find his demeanor a little stylized. But what right did I have to demand emotion? The Cultural Revolution had just started, and ideas of the highest type were surely forming themselves inside his skull.

He said, "I want to be sure you understand that you won't see me very often."

"That's insulting," I said. "Did you suppose I thought China was across the street?"

"It's just that you mustn't expect me to solve your problems," he said. "I already have eight hundred million failures at home, and the last thing I need is another one over here."

I asked what made him think I had problems.

He said, "You do not know how to follow Right Rule Number Three: Relax. But don't expect me to help you. Expect nothing."

I wanted to ask how I was supposed to relax with a world figure in my bed, but I was afraid he would accuse me of personality cultism.

When he left, he said, "Don't worry."

I THOUGHT about his words. They had not been completely satisfying, and an hour after he had left I wanted to hear them again. I needed more answers. Would he like me better if I had been through something—a divorce, a Long March, an evening at Le Club? Why should I exhaust myself in relaxation with someone who was certain to leave? Every night after work I studied the Little Red Book and wrote down phrases from it for further thought: "women . . . certain contradictions . . . down on their knees . . . monsters of all kinds . . . direct experience."

My life began to feel crowded with potential meaning. One afternoon I was sitting in the park, watching a group of schoolchildren eat their lunch. Two men in stained gray clothing lay on the grass. Once in a while they moved discontentedly from a sunny spot to a shady spot, or back again. The children ran around and screamed. When they left, one of the men went over to the wire wastebasket and rifled the children's lunch bags for leftovers. Then he baited the other man in a loud voice. He kept saying, "*You* are not going downtown, Tommy. *We* are going downtown. *We* are going downtown."

Was this the "social order" that the Chairman had mentioned? It seemed unpleasant. I wondered if I should continue to hold out for something better.

AS it happened, I saw him more often than he had led me to expect. Between visits, there were letters—his accompanied by erotic maxims. These are at present in the Yale University Library, where they will remain in a sealed container until all the people who are alive now are dead. A few small examples will suggest their nature:

> My broom sweeps your dust kittens.
>
> Love manifests itself in the hop from floor to pallet.
>
> If you want to know the texture of a flank, someone must roll over.

WE always met alone, and after several years *dim sum* at my place began to seem a bit hole-in-corner. "Why don't you ever introduce me to your friends?" I asked. The Chairman made no reply, and I feared I had pushed too hard. We had no claims on each other, after all, no rules but the ones he sprang on me now and then. Suddenly he nodded with vigor and said, "Yes, yes." On his next trip he took me out to dinner with his friend Red Buttons. Years later, the Chairman would often say to me, "Remember that crazy time we had dinner with Red? In a restaurant? What an evening!"

Each time we met, I was startled by some facet of his character that the Western press had failed to report. I saw, for instance, that he disliked authority, for he joked bitterly about his own. No sooner had he stepped inside my bedroom than he would order, "Lights off!" When it was time for him to go, he would raise one arm from the bed as if hailing a taxi and cry, "Pants!" Once when I lifted his pants off the back of a chair and all the change fell out of the pockets, I said, "This happens a lot. I have a drawer full of your money that I've found on the floor."

"Keep it," he said, "and when it adds up to eighteen billion yuan, buy me a seat on the New York Stock Exchange." He laughed loudly, and then did his impersonation of a capitalist. "Bucks!" he shouted. "Gimme!" We both collapsed on the bed, weak with giggles at this private joke.

He was the only man I ever knew, this pedagogue in pajamas, who did not want power over me. In conversation, he was always testing my independence of thought. Once, I remember, he observed, "Marxism has tend-

THE ACADEMY

I do not think of the academy
in the whirl of days. It does not change. I do.
The place hangs in my past like an engraving.
I went back once to lay a wreath on it,
and met discarded selves I scarcely knew.

It has a lingering aura—leather bindings,
a smell of varnish and formaldehyde,
a certain dusty holiness in the cloisters.
We used to race our horses on the sand
away from it, manes flying, breathing hard.

Trailing to the library of an afternoon,
we saw the ivy crawling underneath
the labyrinthine bars on the window ledges.
I remember the thin librarian's look of hate
as we left book holes in her shelves, like missing teeth.

On evenings doomed by bells, we felt the sea
creep up, we heard the temperamental gulls
wheeling in clouds about the kneeworn chapel.
They keened on the knifing wind like student souls.
Yet we would dent the stones with our own footfalls.

Students still populate the place, bright starlings,
their notebooks filled with scribbled parrot-answers
to questions they unravel every evening
in lamplit pools of spreading argument.
They slash the air with theory, like fencers.

Where is the small, damp-browed professor now?
Students have pushed him out to sea in a boat
of lecture notes. Look, he bursts into flame!
How glorious a going for one whose words
had never struck a spark on the whale-road!

And you will find retainers at their posts,
wearing their suits of age, brass buttons, flannel,
patrolling lawns they crop with careful scissors.
They still will be in silver-haired attendance
to draw lines through our entries in the annals.

It is illusion, the academy.
In truth, the ideal talking-place to die.
Only the landscape keeps a sense of growing.
The towers are floating on a shifting sea.
You did not tell the truth there, nor did I.

Think of the process—moments becoming poems
which stiffen into books in the library,
and later, lectures, books about the books,
footnotes and dates, a stone obituary.
Do you wonder that I shun the academy?

It anticipates my dying, turns to stone
too quickly for my taste. It is a language
nobody speaks, refined to ritual:
the precise writing on the blackboard wall,
the drone of requiem in the lecture hall.

I do not think much of the academy
in the drift of days. It does not change. I do.
This poem will occupy the library,
but I will not. I have not done with doing.
I did not know the truth there, nor did you.

—Alastair Reid

• •

ed to flourish in Catholic countries."

"What about China?" I said.

"Is China your idea of a Catholic country?"

"No, but, um—"

"See what I mean?" he said, laughing.

I had learned my lesson.

To divest himself of sexual power over me, he encouraged me to go dancing with other men while he was away. Then we held regular critiques of the boyfriends I had acquired. My favorite, a good-looking Tex-Mex poet named Dan Juan, provided us with rich material for instruction and drill.

"What is it you like about Dan Juan?" the Chairman asked me once.

"I'd really have to think about it," I said.

"Maybe he's not so interesting," said the Chairman.

"I see your point," I said. Then, with the rebelliousness of the politically indolent, I burst into tears.

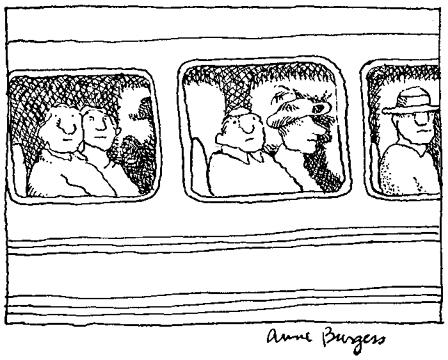
The Chairman took my hand and brooded about my situation. I think he was afraid that helping me to enter into ordinary life—to go out with Dan Juan and then to learn why I should not be going out with him and so forth—might not be very much help at all.

Finally, he said, "I don't like to think you're alone when I'm not here."

"I'm not always alone."

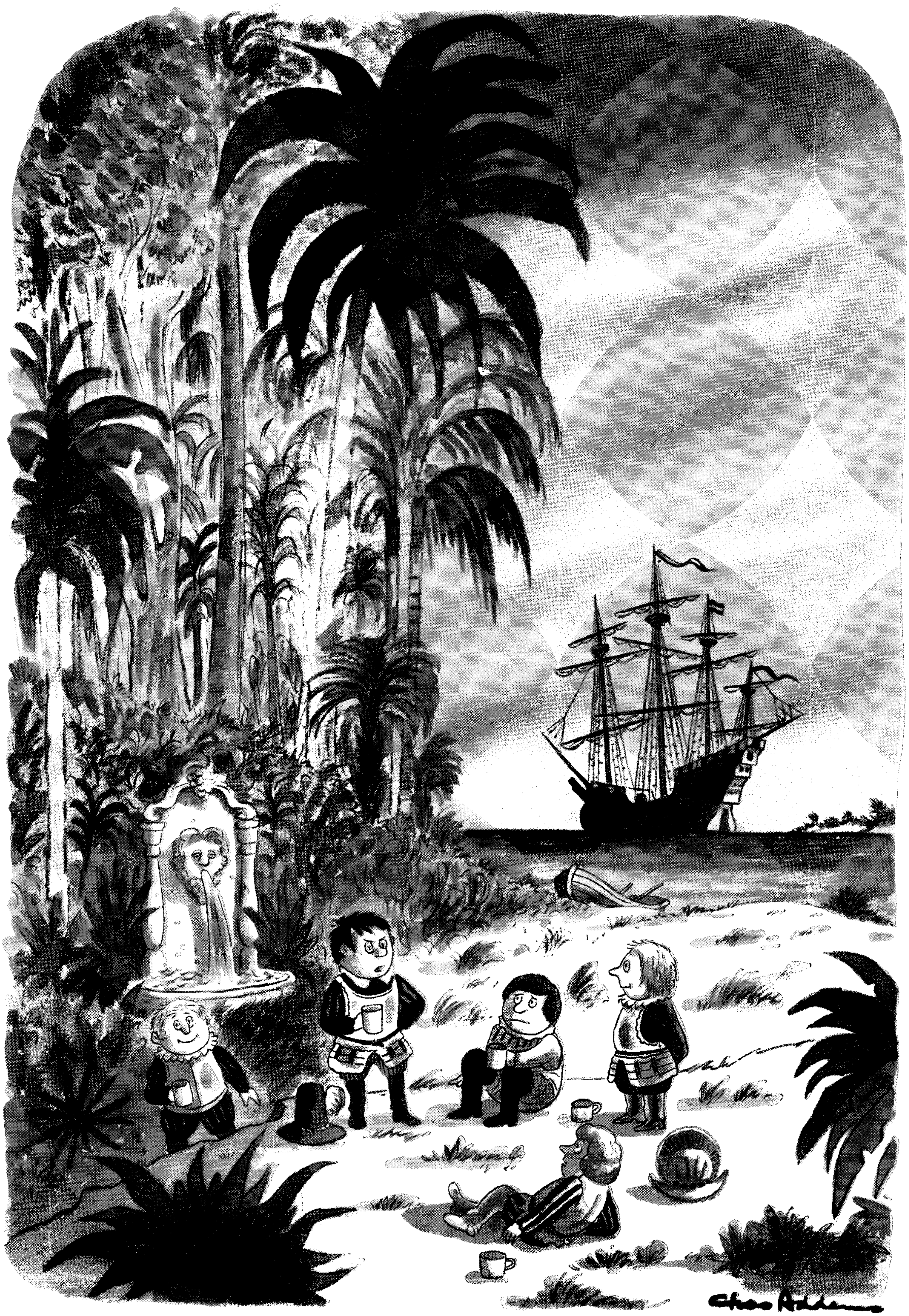
"I'd like to give you a radio."

THE radio never reached me, although I do not doubt that he sent it. His only other gifts we consumed together: the bottles of rice wine, which we drank, talking, knowing that while this was an individual solution, it was simple to be happy. Now other women have pointed out to me that I have nothing to show for the relationship. Adenauer gave Fran a Salton Hotray. Stalin gave Harriet a set of swizzlesticks with little hammer-and-sickles on the tops. William Dean Howells gave my Great-Aunt Jackie a diamond brooch in the form of five ribbon loops terminating in diamond-set tassels, and an aquamarine-and-diamond tiara with scroll and quill-pen motifs separated by single oblong-cut stones mounted on an aquamarine-and-diamond band. That I have no such mementos means, they say, that the Chairman did not love me. I think they are being too negative, possibly.



THE Chairman believed that the most revolutionary word is "yes." What he liked best was for me to kiss him while murmuring all the English synonyms for "yes" that I could think of. And although neither of us believed in a life beyond this one, I feel to this day that I can check in with him if I close my eyes and say yes, yeah, aye, uh-huh, indeed, agreed, natch, certainly, okeydoke, of course, right, reet, for sure, you got it, well and good, amen, but def, indubitably, right on, yes sirree bob, sure nuff, positively, now you're talking, yep, yup, bet your sweet A, O.K., Roger wilco over and out.

—Veronica Geng



"So we've discovered the Fountain of Youth. Who's going to sail the old tub back?"

POTTER

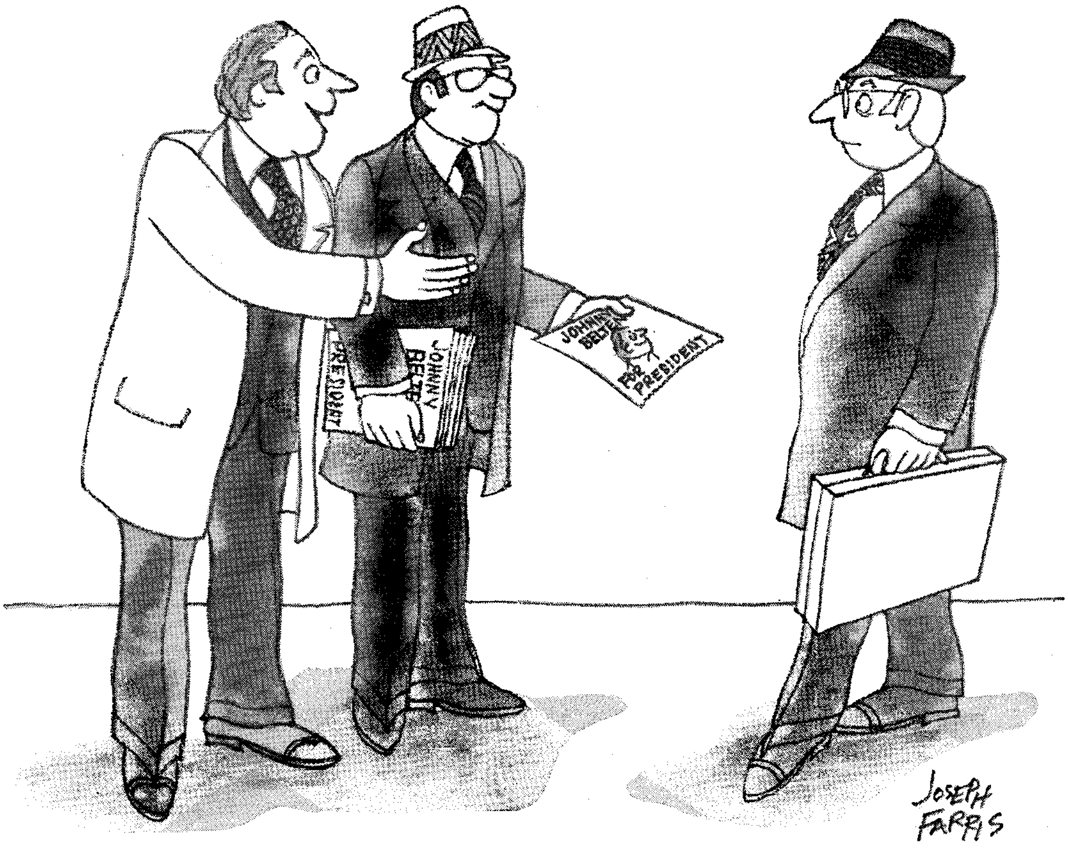
PIOTR was almost forty-one when he fell in love with Laurie Bennett. She lived in Paris, for no particular reason he knew; that is, she had not been drawn by work or by any one person. She seemed young to him, about half his age. Her idea of history began with the Vietnam war; Genesis was her own Canadian childhood. She was spending a legacy of careless freedom with an abandon Piotr found thrilling to watch, for he had long considered himself to be bankrupt—of belief, of love, of license to choose. Here in Paris he was shackled, held, tied to a visa, then to the system of mysterious favors on which his Polish passport depended. His hands were attached with a slack rope and a slipknot. If he moved abruptly, the knot tightened. He had a narrow span of gestures, a prudent range. His new world of love seemed too wide for comfort sometimes, though Laurie occupied it easily.

He called his beloved "Lah-ow-rie," which made her laugh. She could not pronounce "Piotr" and never tried; she said Peter, Prater, Potter, and Otter, and he answered to all. Why not? He loved her. If she took some forms of injustice for granted, it was because she did not know they were unjust. Piotr was supposed to know *by instinct* every shade of difference between Victoria, British Columbia, and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, whereas he, poor Potter, came out of a cloudy Eastern plain bereft of roads, schools, buses, elevators, perhaps even frontiers—this because she could not have found Warsaw on a map. She knew he was a poet and a teacher, but must have considered him a radical exception. She had been touchingly pleased when he showed her poems of his in an American university quarterly. Three pages of English were all he had needed to get past her cultural customs barrier. She kept a copy of the review in a plastic bag, and so far as he knew had never read more than his name on the cover. None of this disturbed him. It was not as a poet that Laurie had wanted Piotr but as a lover—thank God. The surprise to him after their first conversations was that there were any roads, schools, etc., in Canada, though she talked often of an Anglican boarding school where she had been "left" and "abandoned" and which she likened to a concentration camp. "You've really never heard of it, Potter?" It seemed incredible that a man of his education knew nothing about Bishop Purse School or its famous headmistress, Miss Ellen Jones. Bishop Purse, whatever its advantages, had not darkened Laurie's sunny intelligence with anything like geography, history, or simple arithmetic. She had the handwriting of a small boy and could not spell even in her own language. For a long time Piotr treasured a letter in which he was described as "a really sensative person," and Laurie herself as "mixed-up in some ways but on the whole pretty chearfull."

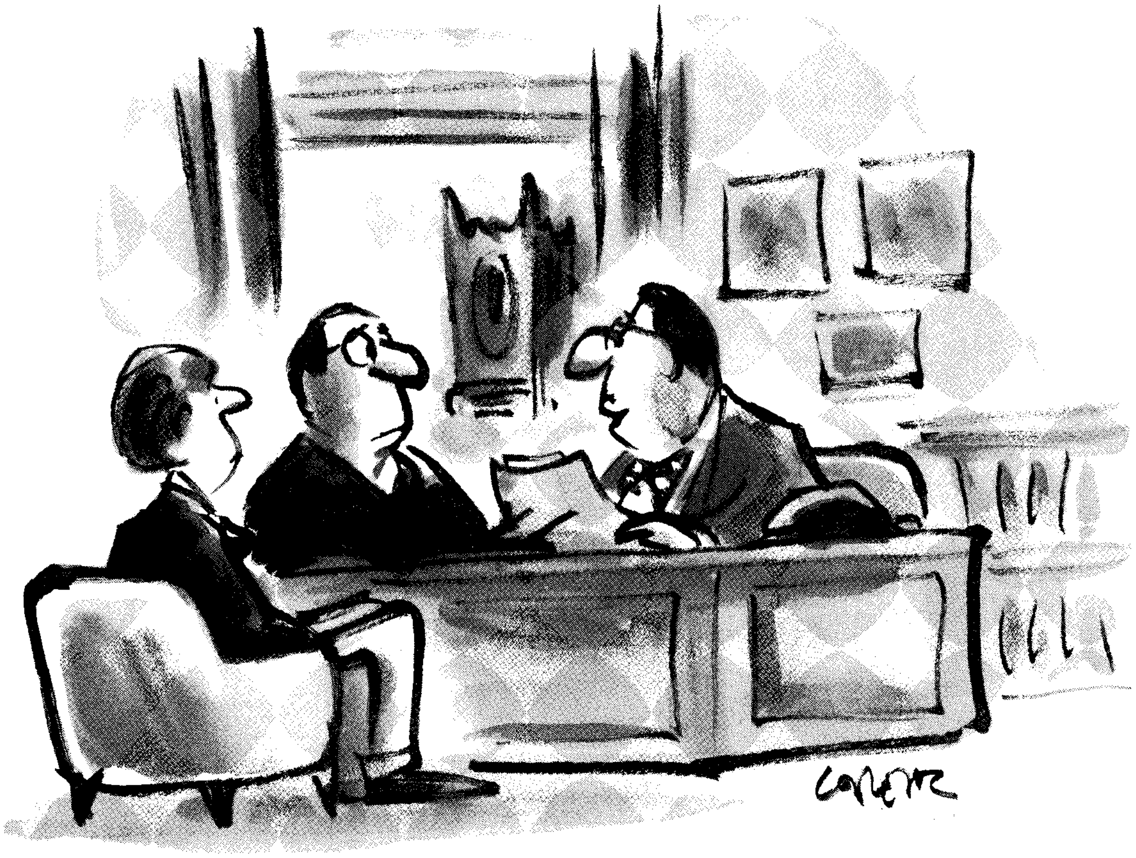
Her good nature made her entirely exotic. Piotr was accustomed to people who could not look at a letter without saying eagerly, "Bad news?" He had known women who set aside a little bit of each day for spells of soft, muted weeping. The problem with Polish women, as Piotr saw it, was that they had always just been or were just about to be deserted by their men. At the first rumor of rejection (a fragment of gossip overheard, some offhand evidence of a lover's neglect) they gave way at once, stopped combing their hair, stopped making their beds. They lay like starfish, smoking in the strewn, scattered way of the downhearted. He saw them, collectively, wet-cheeked and feverish, heard a chorus of broken voices gasping out the dreadful story of male treachery. Out of the fear of losing the man at hand would grow a moist determination to find another to take his place. Piotr was separated from his wife, he was irresolute, and he never had quite what he wanted. What he did not want was a feather bed of sadness. He knew that unhappiness is catching and wondered if happiness might not be infectious, too. All that he needed was to love a happy person and get her to love him.

"Am I too cheerful?" Laurie asked. "They say I am sometimes. I've been told. It puts people off. You know, like 'It's nothing to laugh about.' " *I've been told*. There, at the beginning, she had given him the raw material of future anguish, if only he had been alert. But it had come linked with another statement, which was that if Potter was not exactly her first lover he was certainly among the first, and the first ever to please her—a preposterous declaration he accepted on the spot.

Piotr met Laurie through a cousin he had in Paris, an émigré bachelor who worked at a travel agency. Piotr had never seen Marek's office. Meeting Piotr for lunch in one of the smoky café-bars around the



"*Hi, I'm Johnny Belten. I'm running for President in 1980.*"



"Tuition is sixty-five hundred dollars a year or thirty per cent of your gross income, whichever is more."

• •

Place de l'Opéra, Marek would look at his watch and whisper, "I have to meet someone very high up in Swiss television," or "the editor of the most important newspaper, the most politically powerful man south of the Loire," or "a countess who controls absolutely everything at the Quai d'Orsay." Although he did not say so, it sounded to Piotr very much like social survival in Warsaw. By means of his affability, his ease with languages, and a certain amount of cultural soft-soaping, Marek had acquired a French circle of acquaintance, of which he was extremely proud. But it was a fragile affair, like a child with a constant chest cold. He lavished great amounts of time, care, and worry on keeping it alive, which did not prevent him from knowing every name, event, scandal, and political maneuver in the local Polish colony. He knew so much, in fact, that he was widely believed to be working for the French police. Like most informers—should that have been his story—he was often hard up and often had unexpected money to spend. He lived in the run-down area east of the Hôtel de Ville. The street seemed drab and gritty to Piotr, but his cousin assured him that it was thought fashionable in the highest reaches of bohemia. His rooms were next door to a synagogue and one flight up from an undertaker's. When, as it sometimes happened, nighttime outbursts of anti-Semitism caused swastikas to be chalked on the synagogue, a few usually spilled along to the undertaker's sombre window and over the door and staircase leading to Marek's. The swastikas gave rise to another legend: Marek had been a double agent in the French Resistance. Actually, he had been nowhere near France, and had been barely thirteen by the end of the war. Rumor also had him working for Israel (possibly because of the proximity of the synagogue) and for the C.I.A. His quarters contained large soft lumps of furniture, gray in color, considered "modern," and "American," which had undoubtedly been shipped by airfreight from Washington in exchange for information about Mr. X, who had bought a controlling interest in a toy shop, or little Miss Y, who had triumphantly terminated another school year. The chairs and sofas had in fact been the gift of a Swiss decorator from Bern, who owed Marek money or favors or help of some kind—the explanation always faded out. Although he was far more interested in men than in girls, there were usually more girls than men at his parties. The most beautiful young women Piotr had ever seen climbed the unlighted staircase, undaunted by the matter-of-fact trappings of death on the ground floor or the occasional swastika. Piotr marvelled at his cousin's ease with women, at the casual embracing and hand-holding. It was as though the girls, having nothing to fear, or much to hope for, enjoyed trying out the lesser ornaments of seduction. The girls were Danish, German, French, and American. They were students, models, hostesses at trade fairs, hesitant fiancées, restless daughters. Their uniform the year Piotr met Laurie was bluejeans and velvet blazers. They were nothing like the scuffed, frayed girls he saw in the Latin Quarter, so downcast of face, so dejected of hair and hem that he had to be convinced by Marek they were well-fed children of the middle classes and not the rejects of a failing economy. Marek's girls kept their hair long and glossy, their figures trim. They discussed their thoughts, but not their feelings, with a solemn hauteur Piotr found endlessly touching. But he did not find them lighthearted. They were simply less natively given to despair than Polish women. He was looking for someone, though no one could have told. Perhaps his cousin knew. Why else did he keep on inviting Piotr with all those pretty women? One scowling French girl almost won Piotr when he noticed that the freckles across her nose were spots of russet paint. She was severe, and held her cigarette like a ruler, but she must have been very humble alone with her mirror. "Help me," she must have implored the glass. "Help me to be suitable, wanted." She remarked to Piotr, "How can anyone write poetry today? Personally, I reject the absolute." Piotr had no idea what she meant. He had never asked her, or any woman, to accept the absolute. He had been toying with the hope that she might accept him. Before he could even conceive of an answer, Laurie Bennett intervened. She simply came up to Piotr and told him her name. She had blue eyes, fair hair down to her shoulders, and a gap between her upper front teeth.

“I’ve never wanted to have it fixed,” she told Piotr. “It’s supposed to be lucky.”

“Are you lucky?” said Piotr.

“Naturally. Who isn’t? Aren’t you?”

They sat down, Piotr in a Swiss armchair, the girl on the floor. Remarks in a foreign language often left him facing an imaginary brick wall. Lucky? Before he could answer she said, “You’re the famous cousin? From there?”—with a wave that indicated a world of bad train connections and terrible food. “Do you know Solzhenitsyn? If Solzhenitsyn were to walk in here, I’d get right down on my knees and thank him.”

“What for?” said Piotr.

“*I* don’t know. I thought you might.”

“He isn’t likely to come in,” said Piotr. “So you won’t have to make a fool of yourself.”

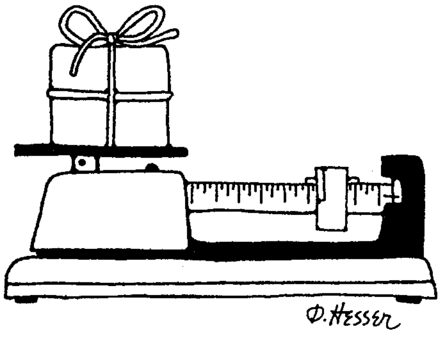
She was already kneeling, as it happened, sitting on her heels at Piotr’s feet. She slid nearer, placed her glass of rosy wine on the arm of his chair, her elbow on his knee: “I was just trying to show you I sympathized.” He wanted to touch her hair but clasped his hands instead. His cousin had told him he looked like a failed priest sometimes. He did, in fact, inspire confessions rather than passion from women.

In his later memories he thought it must have been then that Laurie began to tell about her neglected childhood and her school. She did not sound in the least mournful, though the story was as dismaying as the smiling girl could make it. After Bishop Purse, what she had hated most was someone called “my brother Ken.” “My brother Ken” was so neurotically snobbish that he’d had a breakdown trying to decide between a golden and a Labrador. His wife, whose name sounded like “Bobber Ann,” took the case to a psychotherapist, who advised buying one of each. Piotr did not know Laurie was talking about dogs, and after she explained he found the incident even more mystifying. What he loved at once was her built-up excitement. She was ignited by her own stories and at the end could scarcely finish for laughing. Yes, her brother’s wife was Bobber Ann. Barbara, that is—she had been imitating Bobber Ann’s Toronto accent. “Actually, my brother Ken’s a mean sort of bugger,” said Laurie, happily. “And she, Bobber Ann, she wears white gloves all the time, cleans ’em with bread crumbs—it’s true. How long are you in Paris for, Otter, Potter, I can’t pronounce it. Would you come to a party, if I gave one?”

She was living then in a borrowed apartment on Avenue Mozart. The name of this street remained incantatory to Piotr long after he knew he would never see Laurie again. He remembered of the strange rooms their stern blue walls, a plant that looked like a heap of lettuce leaves, which Laurie kept forgetting to water, and rows and rows of grim sepia views of bridges and rivers.

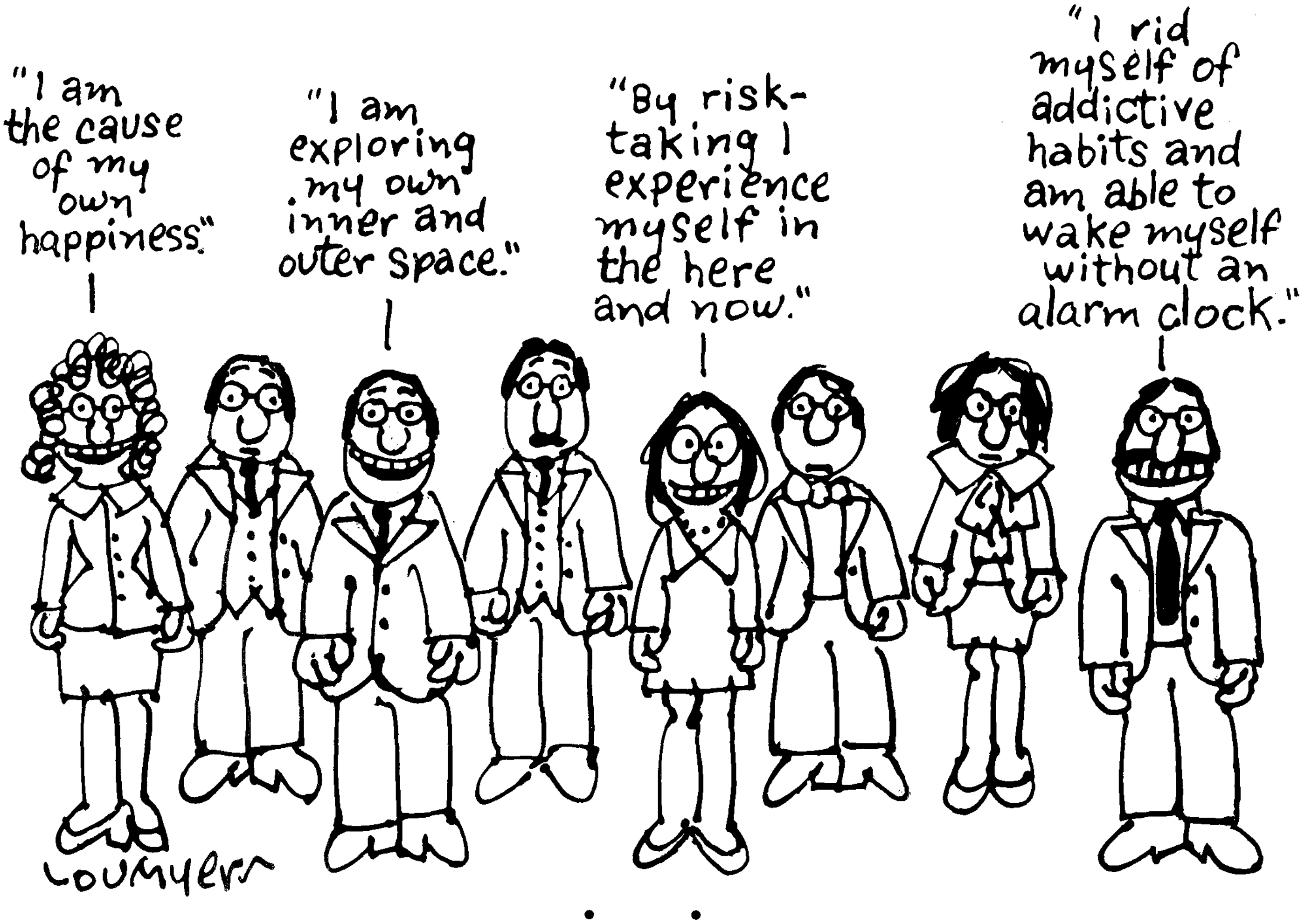
“My friends are well printed, eh?” said Laurie. Her friends worked at UNESCO “or some kind of culture racket like it.” As the last English-speaking stragglers left her party, having finished off the last of the absent hosts’ duty-free gin, Laurie said, with no particular emphasis, “No, you, Potter, you stay.”

THE place on Avenue Mozart was one of so many that in time Piotr stopped counting. Her home was never her own but rooms she camped in while the owners were away. Sometimes she had a dog to walk or a budgerigar to feed, but mostly just the run of the house. She told Piotr she moved on because she wanted peace and could never find it. He supposed, not unkindly, that she had heard some such statement at one of Marek’s parties. A year after Avenue Mozart, the “B” page of his address book was such a hedgehog of scratched-out directions that he bought a book for Laurie alone. He recorded in it the enchanting names of her Paris streets, and mysterious Poste Restante or American Express directions for Cannes, Crans-sur-Sierre, Munich, Portugal, Normandy, Gstaad, Madrid. She sent him bright scraps of news about eccentric living quarters, funny little jobs that never lasted for long, and she sent Piotr all, yes, all of her love. Word came from sunny beaches that Laurie was eating too much, she was lazy and brown and drinking delicious wine. Often she sounded alone. If she wrote “we,” there seemed to be three of them; she travelled with couples, never the same pair twice. “You and I will come here together,” she would promise, of places he would never see in his lifetime. He had told her about the passport and how having it for even three weeks was an erratic favor, because once, twenty years ago now, he had been arrested for political lèse-majesté. He explained, but she kept forgetting. She had no memory, except of her school days; she was like a blackboard wiped clean every week or so. Laurie could not recall restaurants where their most important conversations had taken place. Her life seemed to him fragile and silvery, like a Christmas bauble. When he and Laurie were apart, which was to say nearly always, her life reflected a female, Western mystery: it reflected hotel rooms and crouched skiers and glasses of wine and distorted faces. He could hear her voice and remembered her light hair. He was exiled from Laurie—never Laurie from Piotr. She simply picked up her world and took it with her. He resented his exile. He wanted to take her world, compress it, make sparkling dust of it. He could almost have made himself hate her, because of her unthinking, pointless freedom, her casual way with frontiers. She went from place to place without noticing where she was—he could tell that. What was she doing? Eating, drinking, loving probably, being silly. But even her silliness was a tie, a conspiracy. It had drawn him, made him share private jokes that stayed alive, compelled him to send drawings, pictures, reminders, whatever would strengthen the bond. But by the time these arrived Laurie had usually forgotten the joke and was on to another.



She was not always silly. He saw a face of true unhappiness sometimes, and always because of him—because she loved him and there was half a continent between them; because he had children; because the wife he no longer lived with, had admired but never loved, was like a book he could neither read nor shut. It seemed to him then that he bore a disease that might infect the confident girl and cripple her. He saw the self-doubt on her face, and the puzzled wretchedness. When she said, “There must be something wrong with me,” he heard his wife, too.

THEY parted twice; they had to. Piotr had to go back. Laurie picked up her life and never wondered about his; at least, she never asked.


"I am the cause of my own happiness."
"I am exploring my own inner and outer space."
"By risk-taking I experience myself in the here and now."
"I rid myself of addictive habits and am able to wake myself without an alarm clock."
LouMyers

In Warsaw he woke up each morning with the same question: Is there a letter? Her letters were funny, friendly, loving, misspelled. They were not a substitute for Laurie; they were like medicine that can quiet a symptom but not the root of the malady. She phoned sometimes but he preferred the voice in his mind, and the calls left him empty.

The second time he came to Paris, it was at the end of a hot summer. He found her over an art gallery on Boulevard Malesherbes. She told him that Proust had lived somewhere near, perhaps in the next house. She was unsure who Proust was. Like the Solzhenitsyn remark, it was made to please; it was Laurie's way of paying a compliment to someone she considered clever.

They lived behind closed shutters because of the heat, and came out to the still steaming streets after dark. He noticed that she was wearing a new watch with a white strap. The watch was transparent, with a multitude of stars spinning inside.

"I've always had it," she said when he asked where such a marvel was to be found. She wore it for sleep and in love—that was how he happened to see it. He observed Laurie (she did not see him looking) removing the watch and kissing it before taking a bath. A little later she said, "I picked it up in Zurich once," and then, such was her capacity for forgetting, "It was a birthday present." When the time came to accompany Piotr to the airport she suddenly produced a car. To Piotr, who did not know one automobile from another, it was merely cream-colored and small. "It belongs to the girl who owns the apartment," she said, though until now she had spoken of the owners as "they." At the airport, at the last minute, she said she and Piotr had better forget each other. These separations were killing her inch by inch. She could not look at him, did not want him to touch her. It was a shifting, evasive misery, like a dying animal's. She said, "I'm taking the car and driving somewhere. I don't know where. I don't even know where I'll be sleeping tonight. I can't go back and sleep alone in that apartment."

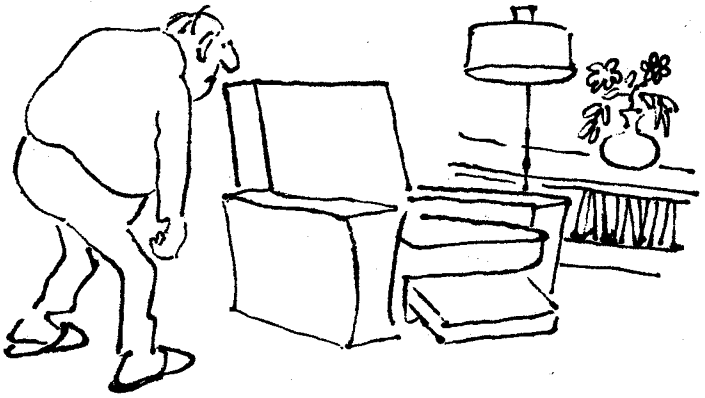
"Will you write?" said Piotr.

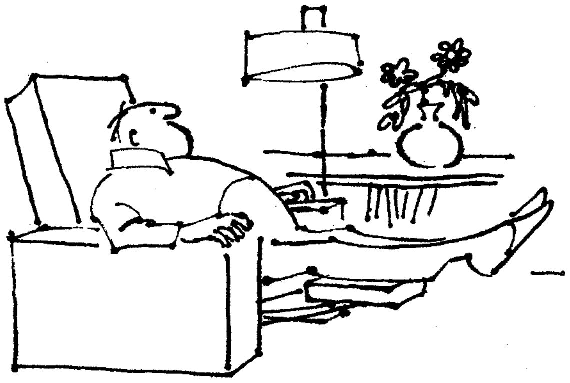
She turned, weeping, and ran.

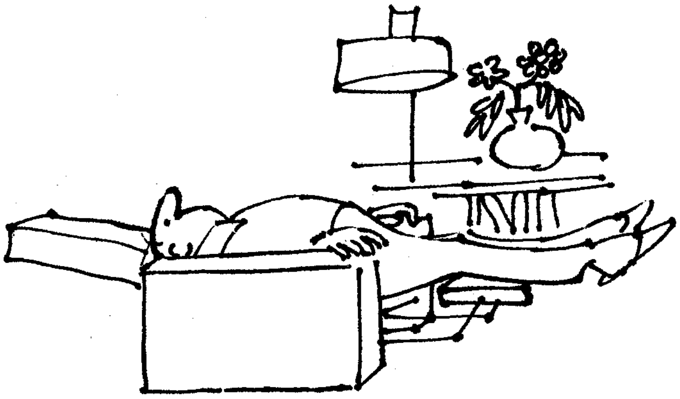
FOR weeks he was stunned by her absence, her silence, her grief, his own guilt. Out of need, out of vanity, he had tampered with a young life. He had not expected this gift of deep sentiment. Perhaps he did not know what to do with it. He knew nothing about women; he had been in jail at the age when he should have been learning. Perhaps Laurie, so lighthearted and careless, had a capacity for passion that overshot Piotr. He had learned in prison that fasting, like any deprivation, made fullness impossible. He had been sick after eating an apple; it was like eating a wet stone. The solitude of prison made anyone else's presence exhausting, and the absence of love in his life now made love the transformed apple—the wet stone he could not taste or digest.

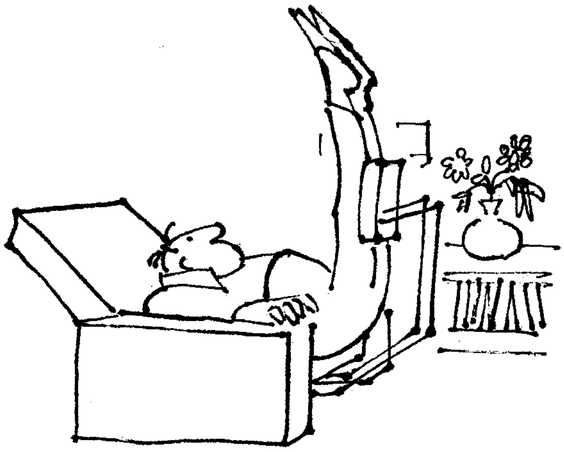
Three days after returning to Warsaw he broke an ankle—just like that, stupidly, stepping off a curb. He wrote into the silence of Paris that he was handicapped, in pain, but the pain was nothing to his longing for Laurie. Weeks later, she answered that she still loved him and no one else. She seemed upset about the ankle; in some way she blamed herself. They were now as they had been, in love, miles apart, with no hope of meeting. He was flattered that she recalled enough of him to say she still loved him—she who had no memory.

PIOTR became forty-three. After delayed, drawn-out, finger-crossed, and breath-holding negotiations he ob-







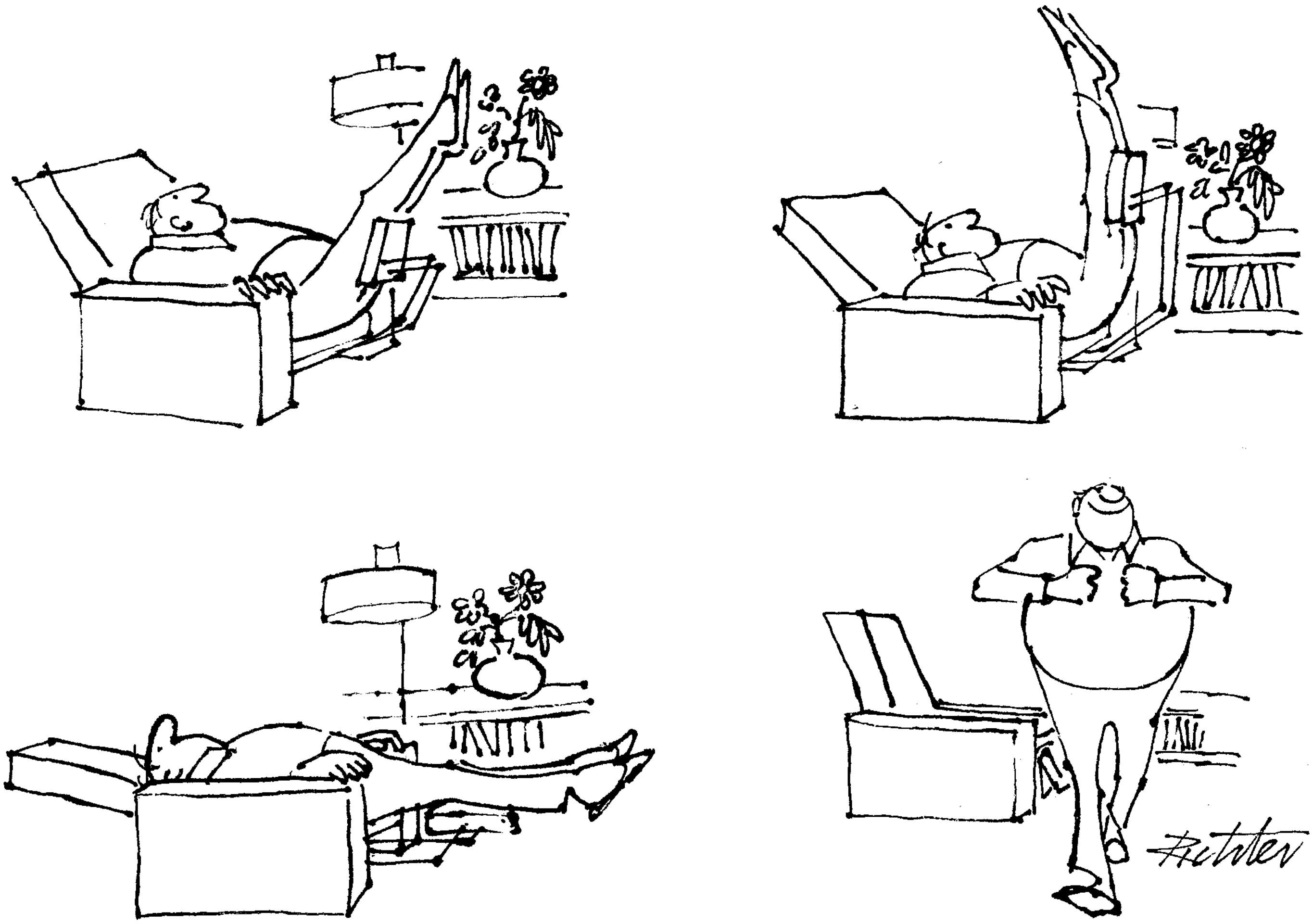


tained a new passport and a three-month visa for France, where he had been invited to give a series of lectures. A young woman was coming to Warsaw, in exchange, to instruct Polish students on tendencies in French poetry since 1950. Piotr silently wished her luck. His departure date had been twice postponed, so he was in a state of tension, dizziness, and unbearable control when he boarded the Air France plane on a cold day of autumn. Until the plane lifted he expected to be recalled because they had all changed their minds. The steward's unintelligible welcome over the intercom seemed for a sickening moment to be meant for him—the plane was going to land so that Professor S—— could be removed. Among a dozen gifts for his love in Piotr's luggage were two she had asked for: Polish birth-control pills, superior to any on the Western market (they prevented conception and also made you lose weight), and a soporific potion that was excitingly habit-forming and provided its addicts with the vivid, colorful dreams of opium sleep. In this way, wrote Laurie, sleep was less boring.

Marek met him in Paris, and wept as they embraced. He had taken a hotel room without a bath for his cousin in order to spare his limited funds. He gave Piotr confusing instructions about a locked bathroom down the hall, advice about the French franc exchange (Piotr had in his possession the allowed one hundred dollars and nothing more), and all the local Polish gossip. Piotr, who had never lied to Marek except over Laurie, invented a university dinner. Fifteen minutes after Marek departed, Piotr, carrying the smaller of his two suitcases, took a taxi to Laurie's new address. The names of her streets were to haunt him all his life: Avenue Mozart, Boulevard Malesherbes, Impasse Adrienne, Place Louis-Marin, Rue de l'Yvette, Rue Sisley, Rue du Regard. This year she occupied a studio-and-bath on the top floor of a new house in Rue Guynemer.

"It's my own, Potter. It isn't borrowed" was the first thing she said to him. "It costs the earth." Then, incoherently, "I'm not always here. Sometimes I go away."

The studio was bright, as neat and almost as bare as a cell, and smelled of fresh paint. So that was what Laurie was like, too. He found her face a shade thinner, her figure a trace fuller; but the hair, the eyes, the voice—no change. Now he recalled her perfume, and the smell beneath the fragrance. She laughed at his suitcase, because, suddenly embarrassed, he tried to conceal it behind the door; laughed at a beret he wore; laughed because she loved him but still she would not make love: "I can't, not yet, not just like that." Their evening fitted his memory of older evenings—Laurie greedy with a menu, telling Piotr in a suddenly prim voice all about wines. She was certainly repeating a lesson, but Piotr felt immeasurably secure, and tolerant of the men she might be quoting. Laurie said, "Isn't this marvellous?"—taking his happiness for granted simply because she was so entirely alive. He remembered how, once out, she hated to go home. "But it's a children's hour," she protested when he said at midnight that he was tired. Four hours later, as they sat in a harsh café, she said, "Potter, I'm so glad I was born," lifting her straight soft hair away from her neck in a ritual gesture of gladness. He took this to be a tribute to his presence. Piotr did not love being alive, but he absolutely did not want to die, which was another thing. At their table a drunk slept deeply with his head on his arms. The day behind Piotr lay in shreds, like the old Métro tickets and strips of smudged paper on the café floor. Laurie said that the papers were receipts—the café was an off-track betting shop. Like the old story about the golden and the Labrador,



this information contained an insoluble mystery. All he knew was that in a hell of urban rubbish Laurie was glad she'd been born. Exhaustion gave Piotr hallucinations; he saw doors yawning in blank walls, dark flights of steps, nuns hovering, but still he did not lose track of the night. The night had to end, and even Laurie would be bound to admit that it was time to go home.

THEY had the next day, a night, a day of sun and long walks, and a night again. From Laurie's window he looked across to the Luxembourg Gardens, which were golden, rust brown, and the darkest green, like a profound shade of night. Each morning he walked to his hotel, unmade his bed, and asked for mail and messages. On the third morning the porter handed Piotr an envelope from his cousin containing a loan in French money, an advance on his university fees. He counted out fifteen hundred francs. The last barrier between Piotr and peace of mind dissolved.

On his way back to Laurie he bought croissants, a morning paper, and cigarettes. He knew that he would never be as happy again. He found Laurie dressed in jeans and a Russian tunic, packing a suitcase. The bed was made, the sheets they had slept in were folded on a chair; through the doorway he could see their damp towels hanging side by side on the shower rail. She looked up, smiled, and said she was going to Venice.

"When?"

"Today. In a couple of hours. I'm meeting this friend of mine." He suddenly imagined the girl with the painted freckles. "You'll be busy for the next few days anyway," she went on. "You put off coming to Paris twice, remember. I couldn't put off my friend anymore. I didn't tell you before, because I didn't want to spoil things when you arrived."

He carried her suitcase to the Gare Saint-Lazare. At the station she put coins in a machine that distributed second-class tickets. He looked around and said, "Do you go to Venice from here?"

"No, they're local trains. We're meeting at a station out of town. It saves driving through Paris, with the traffic and all."

An enormous hope was contained in "we're meeting." He understood, at last, that Laurie was going to Venice with a man. Laurie seemed unaware that he had not taken it in until now, or unaware that it mattered. She was hungry; she had missed her breakfast. "Café de la Passerelle" gleamed in green neon at the end of a dark buffet. Laurie chose from among twenty empty tables as if her choice could make any difference. Piotr, sleepwalking now, ordered and ate apricot pie. The café was shaped like a corridor, with dusty windows on either wall. He and Laurie had exchanged climates, seasons, places—for the windows looked out on slanting rain and deserted streets. Laurie slid back her cuff so that she could keep an eye on her watch. Piotr was silent. She said—sulking, almost—Now, why? What harm was there in her taking a few days off with an old friend while he had so many other things to do?

"It's an old story, you know," she said. "Hardly worth the trouble of breaking off. He always takes me somewhere for my birthday." She stopped, as if wondering how to explain what the old friendship was based on. She said, simply, "You know how it is. He got me young."

"Do you love him?"

"No, nothing like that. I love you. But we planned this trip ages ago. I couldn't be sure you would ever get to Paris. I don't want to hurt his feelings. You'd like him, Potter. Honestly you would. He speaks three different languages. He's independent—enjoys running his own business. I don't even make a dent in his life."

"Does he love you?"

"I keep telling you, it isn't like that. We aren't really lovers. I mean, not as you and I are. We sleep together—well, if we find ourselves in the same bed."

"Try not to find yourself," said Piotr.

"What?" She seemed as candid, as confident, as tender as always. Her eyes were as clear as a child's. Her hand shook suddenly. What was coming now? The unloved childhood? The day her mother left her at Bishop Purse School? The school must have provided clean sheets and warm rooms and regular meals, but she was of a world that took these remarkable gifts for granted. His wife, younger then than Laurie was now, had stolen food for Piotr when he lay in a prison infirmary absolutely certain he was about to die. She had been a prisoner, too, dispatched as medical aide and cleaner. She stopped at the foot of his cot. When she started talking she couldn't stop. He saw that her amber eyes focussed nowhere—her "in-looking eyes" he was to call them. Because of the eyes and the mad rush of words and the danger she was calling down on them he had thought, The girl is insane. Then sanely, quietly, she said, "I have some bread for you." You could not compare Laurie Bennett with a person of that quality. All the same, Piotr had guessed: his wife was insane, but only with him. Danger had reached him after he seemed well out of it, only to be caught on the danger a couple create for each other.

"Look, Potter," said Laurie. "If you mind all that much, I won't go. I'll talk to him."

"When?"

"Now; soon. But I'd be sad. He's a good friend. Why would he want to take me to Venice, except out of friendship? He doesn't need *me*. He knows all kinds of interesting people. I'd be poorer without him—really alone." She was already making women's gestures of leaving, straightening the spoon in its saucer, gathering in whatever belonged to her, bringing her affairs close—protecting herself. "Don't come to the train," she said. "Drink your coffee, read the paper. Look, I've even brought it along. Keep the key to my room. You'll stay there, won't you? As we arranged? If you mind about the concierge seeing you—not that she cares—just use the garage instead of the front door. That's how the married ladies in the building meet their lovers. I'll write," she said. "I'll write to your hotel."

THE MIRACLE

A man staring into the fire
sees his dead brother sleeping.

The falling flames go yellow and red
but it is him, unmistakable.

He goes to the phone and calls
his mother. Howard is asleep,

he tells her. Yes, she says,
Howard is asleep. She does not cry.

In her Los Angeles apartment,
with its small color TV

humming now unobserved,
she sees Howard rocking

alone beneath the waves
of an ocean she cannot name.

Howard is asleep, she says
to the drapes drawn on the night.

That night she dreams
a house alive with flames, their

old house, and her son sleeping
peacefully in the kingdom of agony.

She wakens near morning,
the dream more real

than the clock luminous beside her
or the gray light rising slowly

above the huddled town, more real
than the groan of the first car.

She calls her son who has risen
for work and tells him,

Howard is warm and at peace.
He sees the crusted snows of March

draining the cold light of a day
already old, he sees himself

unlocking the front door of his shop,
letting the office help in, letting

Eugene and Andy, the grease men,
step before him out of the snow.

When she hangs up he looks out
on the back yard, the garbage cans

collapsing like sacks of air, the fence
holding a few gray sparrows,

he looks out on the world he always sees,
and thinks, It's a miracle.

—PHILIP LEVINE

• •

He pushed his chair back. As he got to his feet his ankle gave way. "Oh, Potter, your poor ankle!" Laurie said. "I was on a sailing holiday when you broke it. I was at Lake Constance and I wasn't getting my mail. I wasn't seeing newspapers or anything, and when I finally got back to Paris someone told me there'd been this war on in the Middle East. All those dead and it was already over and I hadn't known a thing—not about your ankle, not anything." She smiled, kissed him, picked up her suitcase, and walked away. Without knowing why, he touched his forehead. He was wearing his beret, which Marek had implored him not to do in Paris; the beret made Piotr look like an out-of-town intellectual, like a teacher from the provinces, like a priest from a working-class parish. What did it matter? Any disguise would do to hide the shame of being Piotr.

Only a few men now were left in the café—Algerians reading want ads, middle-aged stragglers clearly hating Piotr because he was alone and demented, like half the universe. Later, he had no memory of having taken the Métro, only that when he came back up to daylight the rain had stopped. He walked on wet leaves. Like the married women's lovers he entered Laurie's building by way of the garage, slipping and sliding because the slope was abrupt and the soles of his shoes had grown damp. Her room was airless now, with sun newly ablaze on the shut window. He was starting a new day, the third day since this morning. His croissants were still on the table. He picked them up, thinking that it was better to leave nothing. Then he saw there was nothing much he could leave, because Laurie had packed his things. Piotr's suitcase stood locked, buckled, next to the chair on which were folded the sheets they had slept in. Her neatness erased him. The extra towel on the shower rail might have been anyone's. He was wiped out by her clothes' hanging just so, by her

FROM PARIS
SPECIAL FRESH STRAWBERRIES
B TOBEY

"I'll feel silly just buying a quarter of a pound of Swiss cheese."

• •

sweaters and shirts in plastic boxes, by the prim order of the bouillon cubes and Nescafé and yellow bowls on a shelf, by the books—presents, probably—lined up by size beneath the window. He saw the review containing his poems, still honored by its dust-proof bag. What he had never noticed before was that the bag also held a thin yellow book of verse, the Insel-Bücherei edition of Christian Morgenstern's "Palmstroem" poems. Piotr had once translated some of these, entirely for pleasure. When he was arrested he had had scraps of paper in his pocket covered with choppy phrases in Polish and German that became entirely sinister when read by the police. "Well, you see," said a blond, solemn Piotr of twenty years ago, "Morgenstern was not much understood and finally he was mad, but the poems in their way are funny."

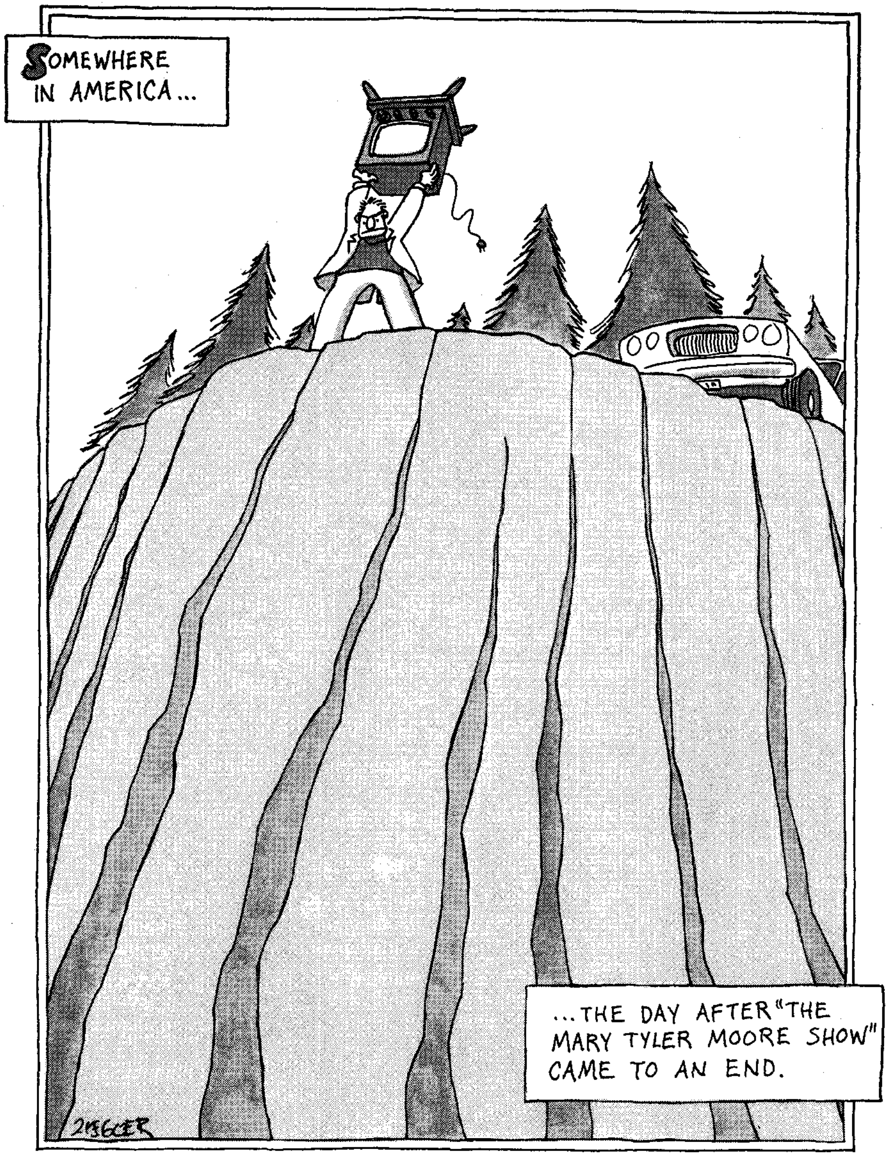
"Why a German?" The sarcasm of the illiterate. "Aren't there enough mad Poles?"

"There soon will be," said Piotr, to his own detriment.

Now, in Laurie's room, even the yellow binding seemed to speak to him. Where had it come from? Someone, another doting Potter, had offered it to her, thinking, Love something I love and you are sure to love me. Who? The flyleaf said nothing. He turned the pages slowly and, on the same page as a poem called "The Dreamer," came upon a color snapshot of two people in an unknown room. Piotr recognized Laurie but not the man. The man was fair, like Piotr, but somewhat younger. His hair was brushed. He wore a respectable suit and a dark-red tie. What Piotr saw at once about his face was that it was genuinely cheerful. Here, at last, caught by chance, was the *bon naturel* Piotr had hopelessly been seeking from woman to woman. Laurie, naked except for her wristwatch, sat on the arm of his chair, with her legs curled like the tail of a mermaid. One hand was slipped behind the man's neck. She held a white shower cap, probably the very cap now hanging on a tap in the next room.

A casual happiness suffused this picture. Piotr was looking at people who did not know or really understand how lucky they were. A sun risen for the lovers alone shone in at the window behind them and made Laurie's hair white and sparkling, like light seen through an icicle. Those were Piotr's immediate, orderly thoughts. He sensed the particular eroticism of the clothed man and the naked girl and only then felt the shock, like a door battered in. The door collapsed, and Piotr saw whatever he had been dreading since he had dared to fall in love—solitude, cruelty, the loneliness of dying: all of that.

Laurie had deliberately left the picture for him to find. She had gone to a foreign bookshop, perhaps the place in the Rue du Dragon that she had pointed out to him, saying she once worked there for a week before they realized she spoke nothing but English, and chose the very book that was bound to catch his eye. She had then staged the picture. Piotr's wife, in *her* calculated dementia, had recorded her own love-making with another man on a tape on


SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA...
...THE DAY AFTER "THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW" CAME TO AN END.
ZIEGLER

which Piotr had been assembling the elements of a course in Russian poetry. Recalling this, he remembered that where his wife had been frantic Laurie was only heedless. The book and the picture were part of the blithe indifference of the two lovers, no more.

He was suddenly overcome with a need to shut his eyes, to be blessed by darkness. He lay flat on the bed and said to himself, What can I give her? I am never here. When he rose and looked at the picture again, it seemed to him it was not where he had left it. Also, in the neat row of clothing he saw a hanger askew. Where there had been only Piotr's croissants on the table there was now, as well, an enamel four-leaf-clover pin, open, as if it had parted from its wearer unnoticed. The door had to be locked from within; he tested the handle and saw he had forgotten to turn the key. Anyone might have entered while Piotr had his eyes shut and examined the snapshot and put it in the wrong place. Laurie, he now saw, had a coarse face, small, calculating blue eyes, and a greedy, vacuous expression. What he had mistaken for gaiety had been nothing but guile. The man seemed more sympathetic somehow. For one thing, he was decently dressed. He looked sane. There was nothing *wrong* with that man, really, except for the peculiar business of having set up a camera in the first place. He was a Western European by dress, haircut, expression. He was not a Latin. Nor was this an English face. Piotr sensed a blunt sureness about him. He would be sure before, during, and after any encounter. He would not feel any of Piotr's anxiousness over pleasing Laurie and pleasing himself. He might have been a young officer of solid yeoman origins, risen from the ranks, in the old Imperial Army—a character in a pre-1914 Viennese novel, say. He became then, and for all time, "the Austrian" in Piotr's mind.

Piotr replaced the picture where he now thought it must have been, next to a poem called "Korf in Berlin." No one had entered the room—he knew that. The clover pin had fallen from Laurie's tunic. It was normal for a hanger to be askew when someone even as neat as Laurie had packed in a hurry.

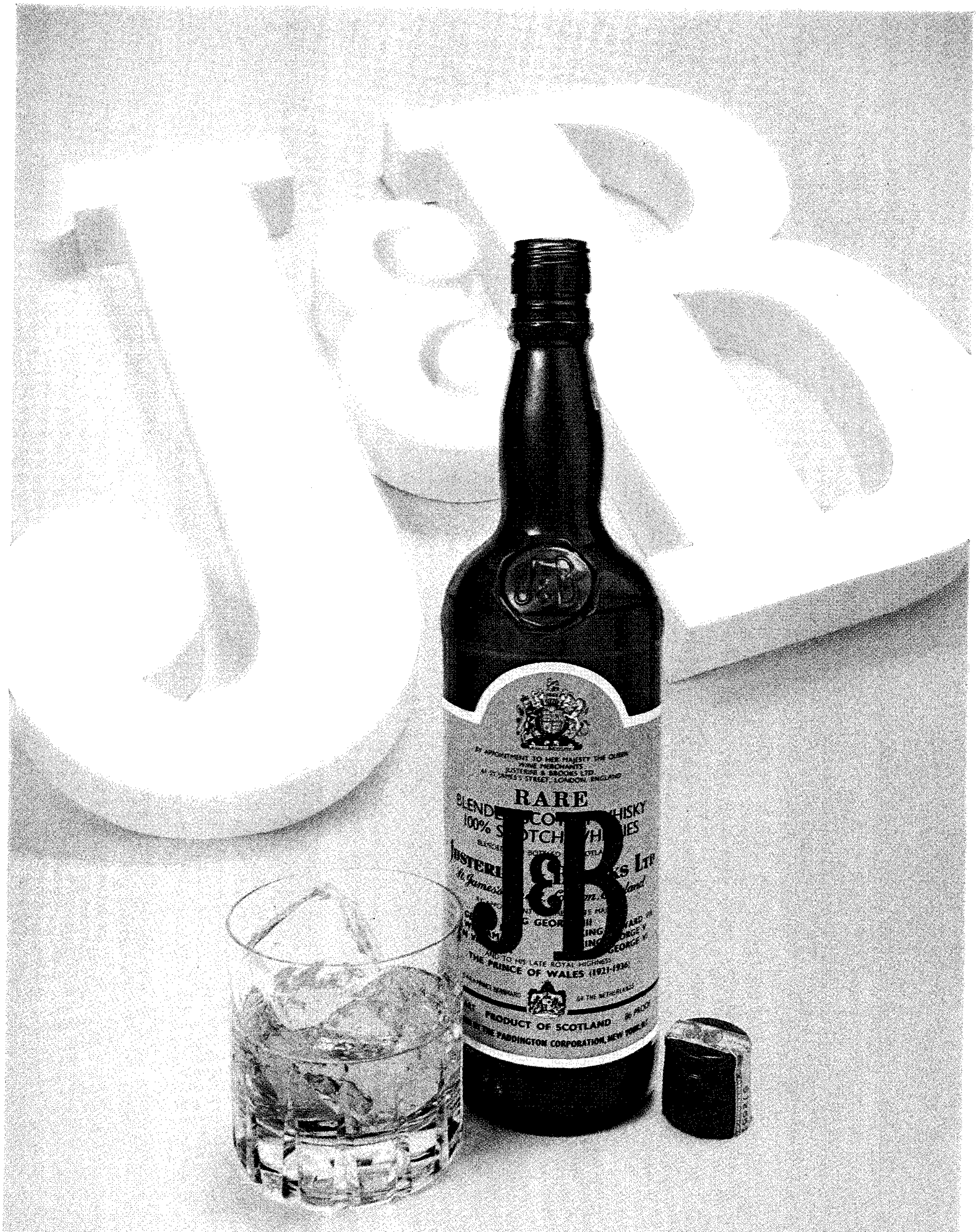
He went out the front door this time, brave enough to confront the concierge and give up Laurie's key.

"Bennett," he said, and on receiving no answer said it again.

"I heard you." She seemed blurred and hostile. He had to narrow his eyes to keep her in focus. The trees in the Luxembourg Gardens were indistinct, as if seen through tears. He found himself caught in a crocodile of schoolboys. A harridan in a polo coat screamed at them, at Piotr, too, "Watch your step, keep together!" Piotr began to search for something that could protect him—trees in a magic ring around a monument might be suitable. As soon as he had selected a metal chair not too close to anyone the sun vanished. A north wind came at him. Leaves rolled over and over along the damp path. He sat on the edge of a forbidden grass plot, staring at a bust he at first took to be Lenin's. He still wore his reading glasses—the reason the concierge had seemed undefined. The bust was in fact a monument to Paul Verlaine.

The grass had kept its midsummer green; when the sun came out briefly the tree shadows were still summer's shadows. But the season was autumn, and he saw a gleaming chestnut lying among the split casings. He would have picked it up, but someone might have seen.

Laurie had escaped from her locked room. It was not her face, not her hair, but her voice and her voice in her letters that pursued Piotr. *He. We. I.* "*He* always takes me somewhere for my birthday." "*We* took the telypherique and walked down from the resevoir." "*I* was on a sailing holiday at Lake Constance." It had been *we* in the Italian Tyrol—"We take lovely picnics up behind the hotel, you can hear bells from the other valley." *We* turned up again in Rome, at Crans-sur-Sierre, at a hotel in Normandy. *We* were old friends—James and Nancy, Mike and Sylvia, Hans and Heidi. *We* existed in a few letters, long enough to spin out a holiday, then fell over Laurie's horizon. Piotr's only balm was that *he* was wiped out. There was a big X over his ugly face. Laurie, or *I*, had been alone for at least the time it took to remember Piotr and write him an eager, loving letter full of spelling mistakes. Piotr had been with her in Portugal, in Switzerland;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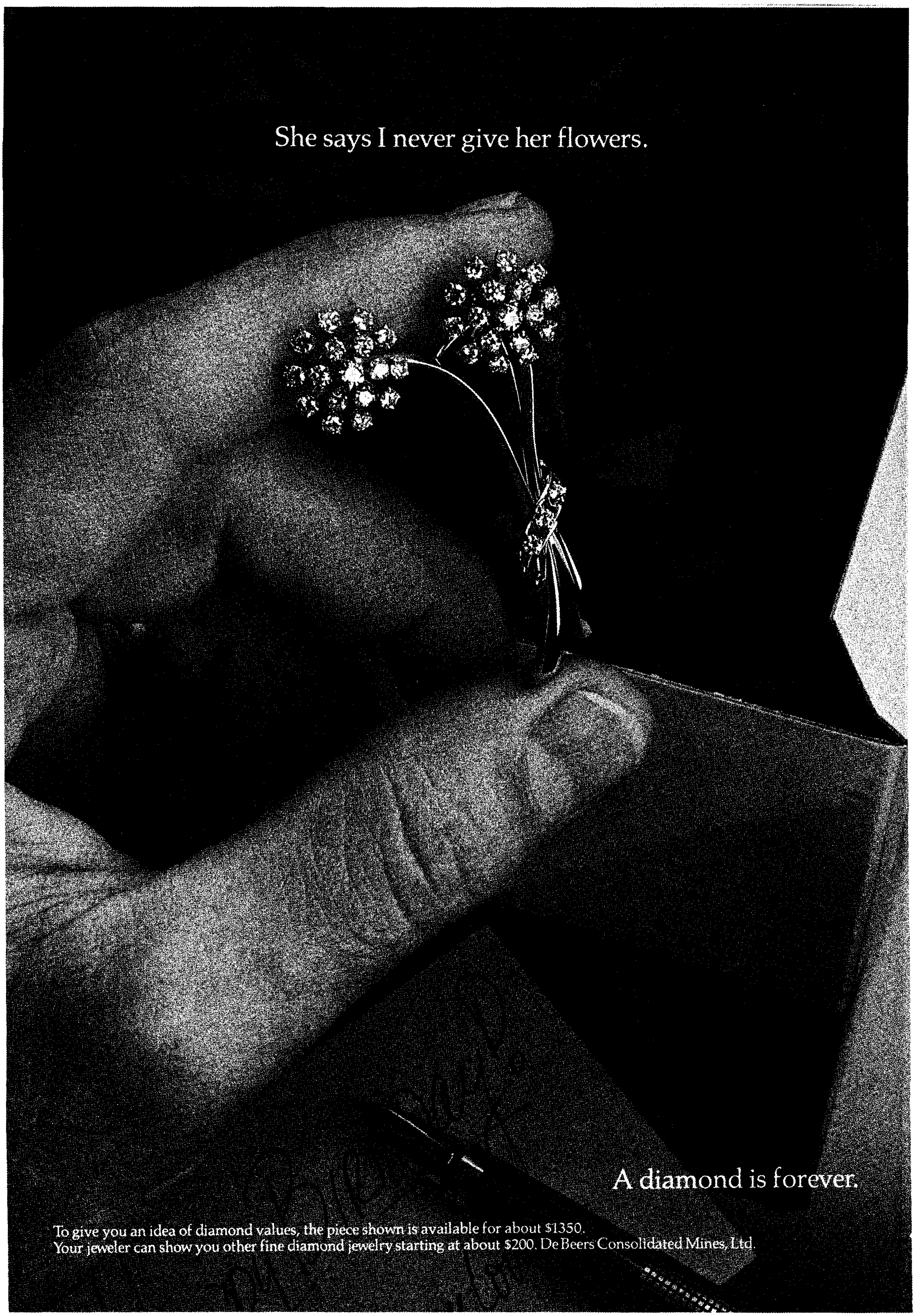
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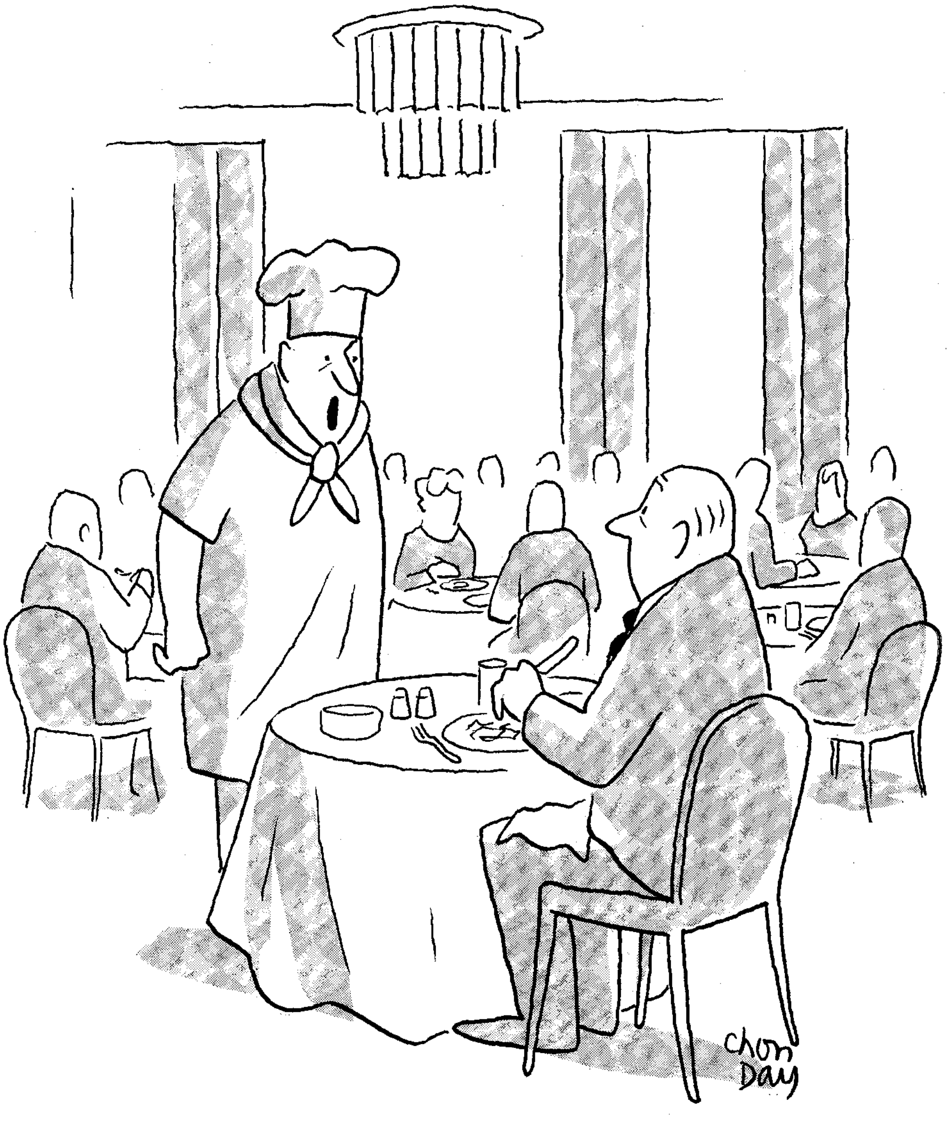
she had generously included him by making herself, for a few minutes, alone and available. Perhaps Laurie had been alone in her mind, truly loyal to Piotr—*he* meanwhile in the bar of the hotel? In the shower? Off on some disloyal pretext of his own so that he could slip an *I* message to his wife?

She was a good girl, all the same, for she had always taken care to give Piotr a story so plausible he could believe it without despising himself. Now that she had told him the truth, he was as bitter as if she had deceived him. Why shouldn't Laurie be taken for holidays? Did he want her alone, crabbed, dishevelled, soured? The only shadow over her life that Piotr knew of had been Piotr himself. Her voice resumed: "I am taking the car and driving . . ." Whose car, by the way? Piotr moved his feet and struck his suitcase. His ankle made a snapping sound. There was no pain, but the noise was disconcerting, as if the bones were speaking to him. She had left him at the airport; she had not known where she would be sleeping that night. "That time you broke your ankle . . . I was on a sailing holiday at Lake Constance." Yes, and something else, about a war in the Middle East. The fragments were like smooth-grained panels of wood. The panels slid together, touched, fitted. Her wild journey to forget Piotr had only one direction: to Lake Constance, where someone was waiting.

There were aspects of Laurie's behavior that, for the sake of his sanity, Piotr had refused to consider. Now, sitting on a cold metal chair, eyes fixed on a chestnut he was too self-conscious to pick up, he could not keep free of his knowledge; it was like the dark wind that struck through the circle of trees. She had used him, made an audience of him, played on his feelings, and she was at this moment driving to Venice with—the element of farce in every iniquity—Piotr's Polish birth-control pills. Moreover, she had entirely forgotten Piotr. His grief was so beyond jealousy that he seemed truly beside himself; there was a Piotr in a public park, trying hard to look like other people, and a Piotr divorced from that person. His work, his childhood, his imprisonment, his marriage, his still mysterious death were rolled in a compact ball, spinning along the grass, away from whatever was left of him. Then, just as it seemed about to disappear, the two Piotrs came together again. The shock of the joining put him to sleep. His head fell forward; he pulled it up with a start. He may have slept for a second, no more. No one had noticed—he looked for that. The brief death had cleansed him. His only thought now was that his memory was better than hers and so he knew what they were losing. As for Laurie's abuse of him, it was simply that she did not know the meaning of words, their precision, their power—why, she could not even spell them. She did not realize when she was lying, because she did not know what words were about. This new, gentle tolerance made Piotr wonder: what if his feeling for Laurie was no more than tenderness, and what if Piotr was incapable of love other than the kind he could give his children? His wife had said this—had screamed it. She did not want his friendship, his loyalty, his affection, his devotion, his companionship. She wanted what he had finally bestowed on Laurie; at least, he thought he had.

HE gave his first lecture and poetry reading in an amphitheatre that was usually used by an institute of Polish civilization for showing films and for talks by visiting art historians. Most of the audience was made up of the Polish colony. A few had come to hear him read, but most of them were there to see what he looked like. The colony was divided that night not into its usual social or political splinters but over the issue of how Piotr was supposed to have treated his wife. All were agreed on the first paragraphs of Piotr's story: there were clues and traces in his early poems concerning the girl who saved his life. He and the girl had married, had lived for years on his earnings as an anonymous translator. Here came the first split in public opinion, for some said that it was really his wife who had done all the work, while Piotr, idle, served a joyous apprenticeship for his later career of pursuing girl students. Others maintained that his wife was ignorant of foreign languages; also, only Piotr could have made something readable out of the translated works.

Next came the matter of his wife's lovers: no one denied them, but what about Piotr's affairs? Also, what about his impotence? For he was held to be



"For God's sake, stop picking at it!"

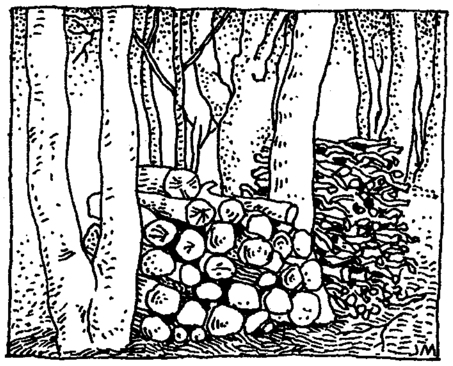
satyr and eunuch and in some ineffable way to be both at once. Perhaps he was merely impotent. Who, then, had fathered his wife's two—or four, or six—children? Names were offered, of men powerful in political and cultural circles.

Piotr had tried to kill his wife—some said by flinging her down a flight of stone steps, others said by defenestration. He had rushed at her with a knife, and to save herself she had jumped through a window, landing easily, but scarring her face on the broken panes. A pro-Piotr faction had the wife a heavy drinker who had stumbled while carrying a bottle and glass. The symmetry of the rumors had all factions agreed on the beginning (the couple meeting in prison) and on the end—Piotr collecting his wife's clothes in a bundle and leaving them on the doorstep of her latest lover.

Before starting his lecture Piotr looked at the expectant faces and wondered which story was current now. After the lecture, strangers crowded up to congratulate him. He was pleased to see one of them, an old sculptress his parents had known before the war. When she smiled her face became as flat and Oriental and as wrinkled as tissue paper. Maria, as virginal as her name, had once been a militant; quite often such women automatically became civil servants, referred to by a younger generation as "the aunts of the Revolution." Her reward had been of a different order: Summoned to Moscow by someone she trusted, arrested casually, released at random, she had lived in Paris for years. She never mentioned her past, and yet she was in it still, for her knowledge of Paris was only knowledge about bus stops. Her mind, ardent and young, moved in the direction of dazzling changes, but these were old changes now—from 1934 to 1935, say. Piotr recalled her spinster's flat, with the shaky, useless tables, the dull, green, beloved plants, the books in faded jackets, the lumpy chairs, the divans covered in odd lengths of homespun materials in orchard colors—greengage, grape, plum. Her references had been strict, dialectical, until they became soft and forgiving, with examples drawn from novels got by heart. He did not know of any experience of passion, other than politics, in Maria's life. Her work as a sculptress had been faithful and scrupulous and sentimental; seeing it, years before, one should have been able to tell her future. She had never asked him questions. Few women had mattered; she was one: a discreet, mistaken old woman he had seen twice since his childhood, with whom he talked of nothing but politics and art. These were subjects so important to him that their conversations seemed deeply personal. Maria did not praise Piotr's lecture but said only, "I heard every word," meaning, "I was listening." There were too many people; they could not speak. They agreed to meet, and just at that moment another woman, with dry red hair and a wide, nervous grin, pushed her way past Maria and said to Piotr, "My husband and I would think it an honor if you came to stay with us. We have a large flat, we are both out all day, and you would be private. We admire your work." She had something Piotr considered a handicap in a woman, which was that she showed her gums. "You are probably in a hotel," she said, "but just come to us when your money runs out."

Piotr kept the card she gave him, and later Marek examined it and said, "I know who they are. She is a doctor. No, no, they are not political, nothing like that. You would be all right there."

WAS it because of the lecture? Because of seeing Maria? Because he had been invited by the doctor? Piotr now considered Laurie's absence with a sense of deliverance, as if a foreign object had been removed from his life. She had always lied. He recalled how she could tremble at will—how she had once spilled a cup of coffee, explaining later that she was attracted to him at that moment but felt too diffident to say so. She had let him think she was inexperienced in order to torture him, had kept him in her bed for hours of hesitation and monologue, insisting that she was afraid of a relationship that might be too binding, that she was afraid of falling in love with him—this after the party where she had said, "You, Potter, you stay." Afterward she told Piotr that she'd had her first lover at fifteen. Old family friend, she said, with children about her age. He used to take her home for holidays from Bishop Purse. She was his substitute for a forbidden daughter, said Laurie, calmly, drinking coffee without spilling it this time. Piotr should have smacked her, kicked her, cut up her clothes with scissors and hung the rags all over the lamps and furniture. He should have followed her around Paris, calling insults, making a fool of her in restaurants. As he was incapable of doing anything even remotely violent, it was just as well she had gone. Relief made him generous: he reminded himself that she had added to his life. She had given Piotr whatever love was left over from her love for herself. You could cut across any number of lies and reach the person you wanted, he decided, but no one could get past narcissism. It was like the crust of the earth.



He slept soundly that night and part of the next afternoon. Marek had left books at his hotel, the new novels of the autumn season. Nothing in them gave Piotr a clue to the people he saw in the streets, but the fresh appearance of the volumes, their clean covers, the smooth paper and fanciful titles put still more distance between himself and his foolish love affair. After dark his cousin arrived to take him to a French dinner party. Piotr had been accepted by a celebrated, beautiful hostess named Eliane, renowned for her wit, her lovers, and her dislike of foreigners. She had been to Piotr's lecture. At the dinner party she planned to place Piotr on her right. Marek was afraid that Piotr did not take in what this signified in terms of glory. Any of the people at that lecture would have given an arm and a leg if the sacrifice had meant getting past Eliane's front door.

Piotr asked, "What does she do?"

They travelled across Paris by taxi. Marek continued his long instructions, telling Piotr what Eliane was likely to talk about and what she thought about poetry and Poland. Piotr was not to contradict anything, even if he knew it to be inaccurate; above all, he was not to imagine that anything said to *him* was ever meant to be funny. Marek and Piotr would be the only foreign guests. He begged Piotr not to address any remark to him in Polish in anyone's hearing. Answering Piotr's question finally, he said that Eliane did not "do" anything. "You must get over the habit of defining women in terms of employment," he concluded.

During the preliminary drink—a thimble of sweet port—Marek did not leave his cousin's side. The hostess was the smallest woman Piotr had ever seen, just over dwarf size. She wore a long pink dress and had rings on every finger. To Piotr's right, at table, sat a pregnant girl with soft dark hair and a meek profile. He smiled at her. She

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stared at a point between his eyes. His smile had been like a sentence uttered too soon. Marek's expression signalled that Piotr was to turn and look at his hostess. Eliane said to him gravely, "Have you ever eaten salmon before?" She next said, "I heard your lecture." Piotr, still bemused by the salmon question, made no reply. She continued, "The poetry you recited was not in French, and I could not understand it." She waited; he waited, too. "Were you *greatly* influenced by Paul Valéry?" Piotr considered this. His hostess turned smoothly to the man on her left, who wore a red ribbon and a rosette on his lapel.

"Cézanne was a Freemason," Piotr heard him saying. "So was Braque. So was Juan Gris. So was Soutine. No one who was not a Freemason has ever had his work shown in a national museum."

The pregnant girl's social clockwork gave her Piotr along with the next course. "Is this your first visit to Paris?" she said. Her eyes danced, rolled almost. She tossed her head, as a nervous pony might. Where the rest of the table was concerned, she and Piotr were telling each other something deliciously amusing and private.

"It is my third trip as an adult. I came once with my parents when I was a child." He wondered if his discovery of chestnut meringues at Rumpelmayer's tearoom in 1938 was of the slightest interest.

"The rest of the time you were always in your pretty Poland?" The laugh that accompanied this was bewildering to him. "What could have been keeping you there all this time?" In another context, in a world more familiar, the look on the girl's face would have been an invitation. But what Piotr could see, and the others could not, was that she was not really looking at him at all.

"Well, at one time I was in prison," he said, "and sometimes translating books, and sometimes teaching at a university. Sometimes the progression goes in reverse, and your poet begins at the university and ends in jail."

"Have you ever had veal cooked this way before?" she said, after a quick glance to see if their hostess was ready to take on Piotr again. "It is typically French. But not typically Parisian. No, it is typically provincial. Eliane likes doing these funny provincial things." She paused again. Piotr was still hers. "And where did you learn your good French and your charming manners?" she said. "In Poland?"

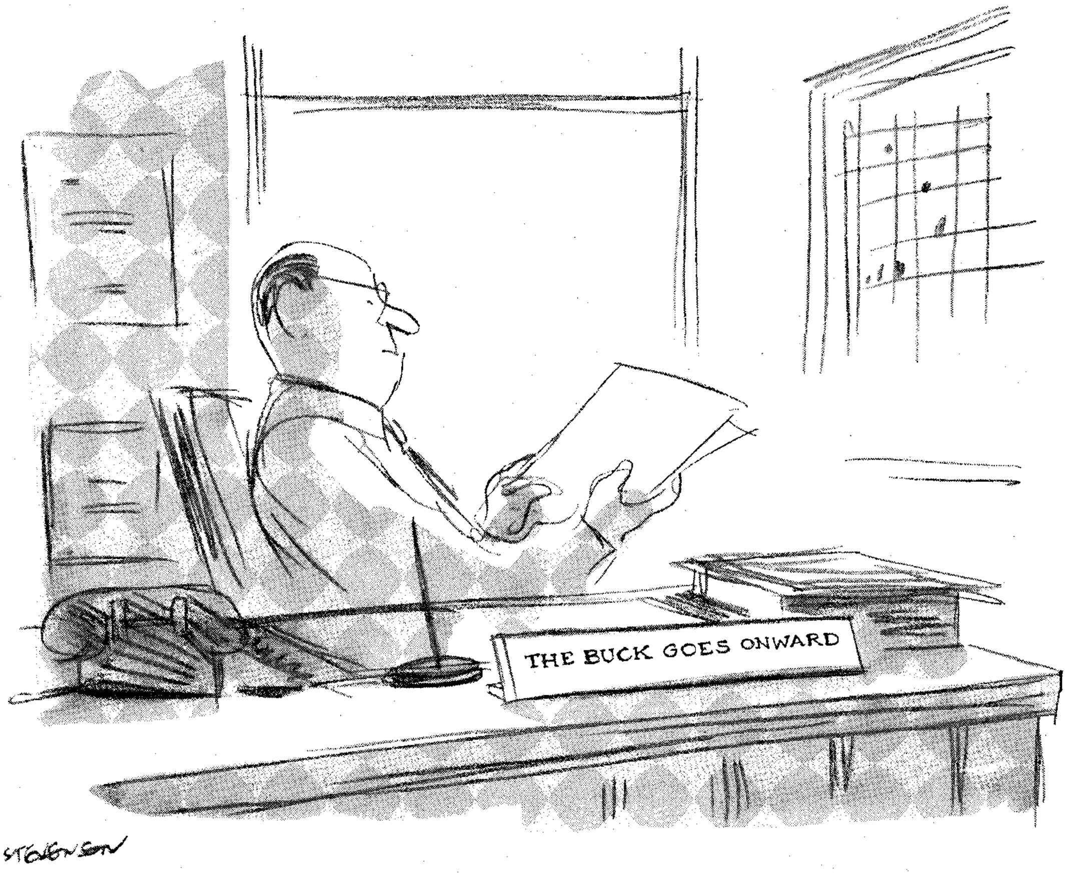
"The hardest thing to learn was not to spit on the table," said Piotr.

After that both women left him in peace. But of course he was not in peace, for Marek was watching. He did not reproach Piotr, but Piotr knew he would not be invited to a French evening again.

PERHAPS because he had slept too much in the afternoon, he found that night long and full of dark misery. He awoke at the worst possible hour, at four, when it was too late to read—his eyes watered and would not focus—and too early to get up. He heard the chimes of the hotel clock downstairs striking five, then six. He slept lightly and woke on the stroke of seven. His body had taken over and was trying to show him that the nonchalance about Laurie had been a false truce. Feeling dull and sick, he shaved at the basin in his room, and asked the maid to unlock the door down the hall so that he could have a bath. He entered the steamy room, with its cold walls and opaque windows, reminding himself that Laurie was a foreign object, that he had a life of his own, that he had a center of gravity. His body reacted to this show of independence with stomach cramps and violent nausea. His mouth went dry when he returned to his room to find a breakfast tray waiting. The skin around his mouth felt attacked by small stinging insects. A headache along his hairline prevented him from unfolding the morning paper or reading a letter from home. The day was sunny, and he saw now that the commonplace sayings about crossed love were all true: the weather mocked him; he craved darkness and rain. His unhappiness was a disease. Strangers would see signs of it, and would despise him.

He loved her. For more than two years now his waking thought had been Is there a letter? He wanted to reach across to her, straight to Venice, but she had to want him—otherwise he was a demand, a claim, a dead weight on her life; he was like the soft, curled-up, dejected women who seemed to make an equal mess of love and cigarette ash. Laurie was in Venice, on a snowy beach. (The Venice of his imagining was all blue and white.) *She lay immodestly close to* a cloudy man. Piotr could not really see him. Perhaps he was placid, like the Austrian, or thin and worried, like Piotr. Perhaps he was a disgusting boulevardier with cheeks like boiled shrimp. "He speaks three languages . . . enjoys running his own business." Oh, inferior, callous, stupid!

Piotr told his diminished self, My poems are translated into . . . I have corresponded with . . . been invited by . . . I can lecture in *Polish, Russian, Lithuanian,*



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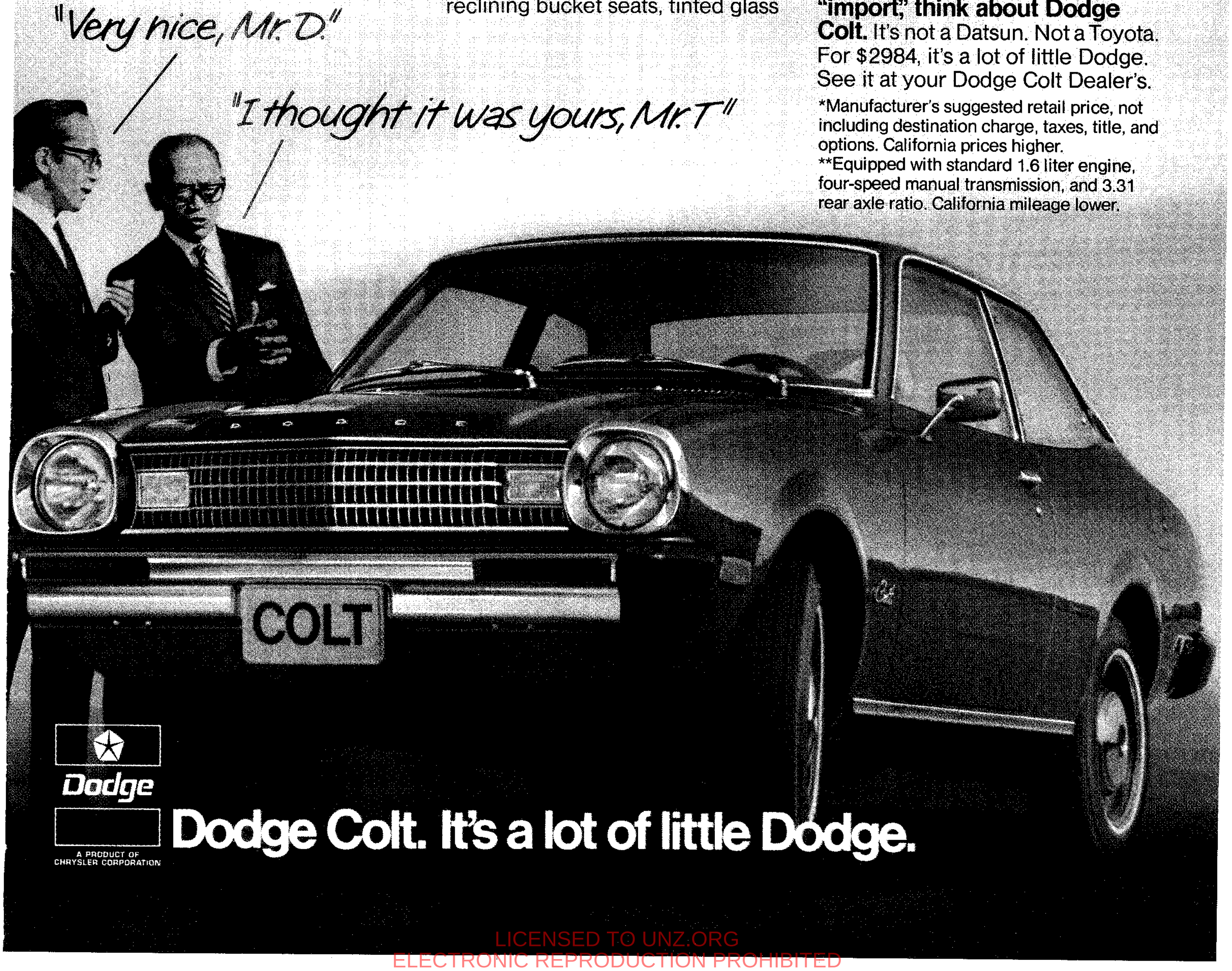

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German, English, French, and I can also . . .

Laurie had assured Piotr that no one, ever, had been like him. She had said, "To think that until now I thought I was just one more frigid North American!" Piotr had believed. He wanted to compose a scream of a letter: Where are you? Why don't you send me a telegram, give me a sign? I haunt the hotel office where mail is kept. I mistake the hotel bill for a message saying you have come back. They say that mail from Italy is slow, but I see other people receiving letters with Italian stamps. I wake at dawn wondering if today will be the day of the letter.

His torment was intensified by the number of mail deliveries; there were three a day, with a fourth for parcels (should she show she remembered him by sending a book). The porter, sorting letters, would see Piotr hovering and call, "Nothing!" and Piotr would scurry away as if he had been caught in some shameful voyeur posture. He now heard and saw "Venice" everywhere: When he bought fruit he found it stamped on an orange. He even said, "God," though until now he had thought there was no God to hear him.

PIOTR had still not received any money from the university. He was used to administrative languor, but the francs his cousin had advanced him were melting fast and Piotr did not want to ask Marek for more. The day came when he decided to leave his hotel and move in with the doctor and her husband. Marek approved of the address, which was close to the École Militaire; he had unearthed what he thought of as useful information: the doctor and her husband had emigrated to France, separately, before the war. They had met in a Polish Resistance network operating out of Grenoble. The marriage was not a happy one. The husband had a mistress and an illegitimate daughter, with whom he spent every Sunday. The doctor was certain to fall in love with Piotr, Marek said.

Piotr did not care for the street, which seemed to him frozen and hostile. There was a desperate, respectable shabbiness about the house. Laurie would never have lived there. In the icy stairwell an elevator creaked on swaying cables. The halls were dim. Tenants rode in the lift and crossed in passageways without speaking, staring flatly. He imagined each high-ceilinged apartment occupied by one person, living alone, working in a ministry, eating ready-made food on the edge of a table at night. His hostess welcomed him as an old acquaintance and made up his bed in the room she had once used for private consultations. Vestiges of the old regime remained—the powerful lights overhead, the washbasin in a corner, a leather folding screen. Under his bed he discovered a case of books. None were newer than the early nineteen-fifties; probably it was then that the couple's marriage had broken down. The French bindings had gone from white to yellow. There were a number of volumes about the war. Piotr, a decade or so younger than the heroic generation, had always been faintly irritated by them.

The doctor was on the staff of a clinic in the Thirteenth Arrondissement, where she now had an office and received her private patients. She gave Piotr a ring of house keys and the key to a letter box downstairs in the court. This led Piotr to new hauntings. He could not bring himself to cross the courtyard without peering through the slot of the box, even if he had looked only half an hour before. He expected word from Laurie at any time: his old hotel might easily receive a special-delivery letter and send it around by messenger. Sometimes a gleam of light on the metal lining of the box could have been a letter, and the hope he felt almost made up for the disappointment. He also had a new worry: a lump, like a large black stone, filled his chest. He felt it when he woke up in the morning. The first thing he heard was an alarm clock in the doctor's bedroom shortly before six, and then he would become aware of the stone. He would hear the doctor's husband getting up and listening to the six-o'clock news in the bathroom. He was small and bald and polite to Piotr. He did not really have to get up before six. He simply did not want to be alone with his wife more than he had to. The doctor actually said so to Piotr, staring at him craftily and boldly, obviously hoping for some oblique, similar confidence about his wife. Piotr noticed that when the pair were alone they argued in French. It was their language for reproach and for justification. He would remember how he had parted from his wife and given up his children so that the children would not have to hear adult violence from their dark bedroom. Often in the night Piotr heard the doctor's singsong complaint, which had an almost poetical rhythm to it. She said that her husband was a miser who did not love her. He deprived her of money; he deprived

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her of warmth. If the husband replied—a low grumble of words in which Piotr caught "never" and "idea"—her voice became discordant, choppy, like a child banging crazily on piano keys. He heard, "Some men are cruel, but at least they are intelligent. How you must be gloating. You think *you* have come out of this safely. Well, you may not have a chance to gloat for long."

Sometimes the doctor had breakfast with Piotr. She told him how she had studied medicine in France, and about the war and the Resistance, adding, inevitably, "You are too young to remember." She said, "My husband was brave in that war. But he does not understand an educated woman and should never have married one." What she really wanted to talk about was Piotr and his wife. She looked, she stared, she hoped, she waited. Piotr was used to that.

He gave his second lecture, in French, in a basement classroom. This time he had a row of well-dressed, perfumed Frenchwomen—the inevitable *femmes du monde* attracted by the foreign poet—including, to his surprise, the pregnant girl from the fatal dinner party. A number of students, lowering as though Piotr intended in some way to mislead them, slumped at the back of the room. After the lecture a young man wearing a military-service haircut got up to ask if Piotr considered himself right-wing. Piotr said no.

"I heard they only let Fascists out."

"I have not been let out like a dog," said Piotr amiably. "I am here like any ordinary lecturer."

A girl applauded. One of the well-dressed women called him "*Maître*." Piotr pulled his beret down to his ears and scuttled out to the street. The students had been suspicious, the women distant and puzzled. What did they expect? He remembered Laurie's smile, her light voice, how suddenly her expression could alter as one quick wave of feeling followed another. He remembered that she had loved him and tried to make him happy, and that he was on his way to the doctor's silent flat. The stone in his chest expanded and pressed on his lungs. All that prevented him from weeping in the street was the thought that he had never seen a man doing that. In his room, he was overtaken. He was surprised at how warm tears were—surely warmer than blood. He said to himself, "Well, at least I am crying over something real," and that was odd, for he believed that he lived in reality, that he had to. The stone dissolved, and he understood now about crying. But the feverish convalescence that followed the tears was unpleasant, and after a few hours the stone came back.

AND so continued the most glorious autumn anyone in Paris could remember. The rainy morning of Laurie's departure had given way to blue and gold. And yet when Piotr, a haunter of anonymous parks now, sat with his back in shade, he felt a chill, as if the earth were tipping him into the dark. Marek, forgiving him for his French dinner fiasco, invited him to a new restaurant in the Latin Quarter. Piotr had the habit of eating anything put before him without tasting or noticing much. He could hear Laurie's voice mockingly describing their meal: "Mushrooms in diesel oil, steak broiled over moldy straw, Beaujolais like last year's vinegar." The other diners were plain-looking couples in their thirties and forties with *Le Monde* or *Le Nouvel Observateur* folded next to their plates. He noticed all this as if he were saving up facts to tell Laurie. The cousins' conversation was quiet gossip about Poles. They recalled a writer who had once been such a power in Warsaw that his objection to a student newspaper had sent Piotr to jail and Marek into exile. Now this man was teaching in America, where he was profoundly respected as someone who had been under the whip and survived to tell. He still had his sparse black teeth, said Marek, whose knowledge of such details was endless, and the university at which he taught had offered to have them replaced by something white and splendid. But the fact was that the writer who had broken other men's lives in the nineteen-fifties was afraid of the dentist.

Marek ordered a second bottle of wine and said, "Every day I wonder what I am doing in Paris. I have no real friends. I have enemies who chalk swastikas on my staircase. I speak seven languages. My maternal grandmother was the daughter of a princess. Who cares about that here? Perhaps I should go back to Poland." This was a normal émigré monologue; Piotr did not attempt to reply. They walked in the mild night, along bright streets, threading their way past beggars and guitar players, stopping to look at North African pastry shops. Piotr was troubled by the beggars—the bedraggled whining mothers with drugged, dozing babies, the maimed men exhibiting their blindness and the stumps of arms and legs for cash. "Yugoslav gangs,"

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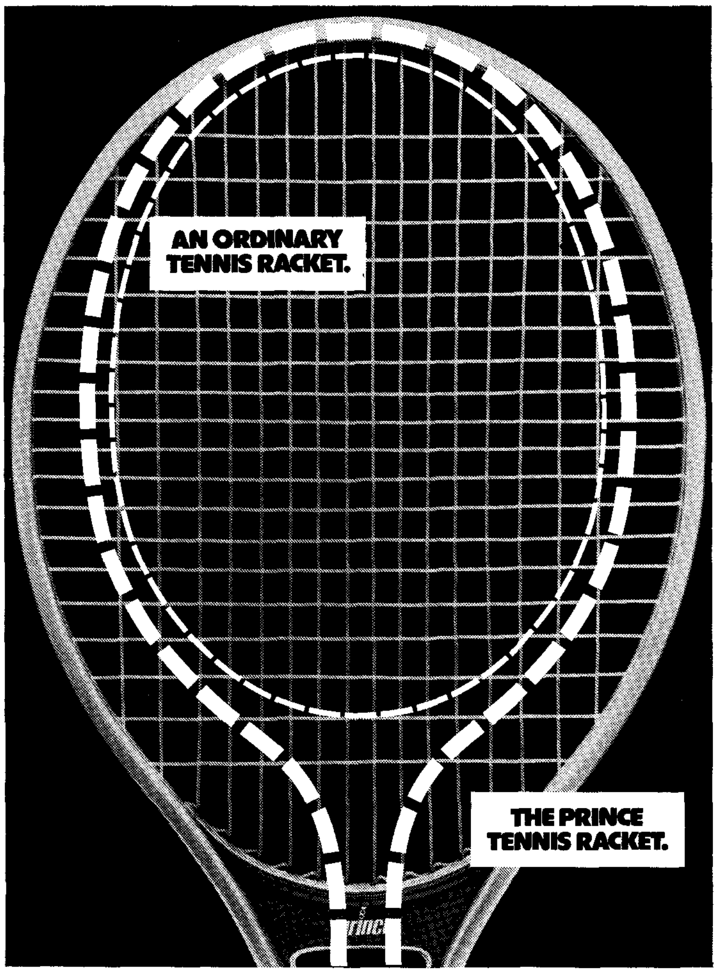

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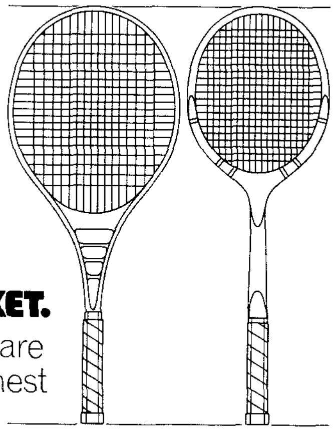

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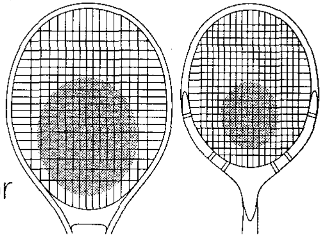

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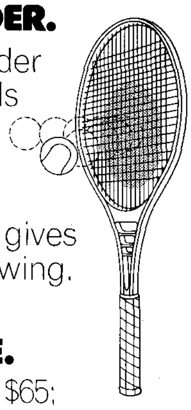

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said Marek, shrugging. He reminded Piotr that begging was part of freedom. Men and women, here, were at liberty to beg their rent, their drink, their children's food. Piotr looked at him but could see no clue, no double meaning. Marek had settled for something, once and for all, just as Piotr had done in an entirely other existence. As they neared the Seine he had a childlike Christmas feeling of expectancy, knowing that the lighted flank of Notre Dame church would be reflected, trembling, on the dark water. He was forgetting Laurie—oh, surely he was! He decided that he would write about their story, fact on fact. Writing would remove the last trace of Laurie from his mind and heart. He was not a writer of prose and only an intermittent keeper of diaries, but he began then and there taking the cool historical measure of Laurie and love. He felt bold enough to say something about Laurie Bennett, *and something else about* Venice.

"Oh, Laurie—Laurie is in Florence," said Marek. "I had a card." Between Piotr's ribs the stone grew twice its size. "She travels," Marek went on. "An older man gives her money." He dropped the only important subject in the world to go on talking about himself.

"The older man," said Piotr. "Is he her lover?"

"She has never produced him," said Marek. "You always see Laurie alone. I have known her for years. You can never look at Laurie and look at another man and say 'sleeping with.' But this man—she was so innocent when she first came to Paris that she tried to declare him to the police as her source of income and nearly got herself kicked out of the country. That was years ago now."

Years ago? Piotr had never questioned her real age. Laurie looked young, and she talked about her school days as if they were just behind her. Perhaps she was someone who refused to have anything to do with time. In that case her youthfulness implied a lack of understanding: Just as she spelled words wrong because she did not know what words meant, she could not be changed by time because she did not know what change was about.

Piotr awoke the next morning with a flaming throat and a pain in his left shoulder. He could scarcely get his clothes on or swallow or speak. His hostess sat wearing a wrapper, hunched over a pot of strong tea. Today was Sunday.

"Mass in the morning, horse races *in the afternoon*," she said, referring to her husband, who had vanished. Piotr remembered what Marek had said about the illegitimate child. The doctor gave Piotr dark bread, cream cheese, and plum jam, and waited to hear—about his wife, of course. She never stopped waiting. From the kitchen he could see the room he had just left. He thought of his bed and wished he were in it, but then he would be her prisoner and she might talk to him all morning long.

Outside, above the courtyard, thin autumn clouds slid over the sun. He could hear the cold sound of water slopped on the cobblestones and traffic like a dimmed helicopter. His life seemed to have solidified overnight. Its substance was translucid, like jasper. He was contained in everything he had ever said and done. As for his pain, it was an anxious mystery. *My shoulder, my throat, my ribs: Is it a fatal angina? Cancer of the trachea? Of the lungs?* The left side of his body was rotting with illness within the jasper shell of his life.

He said to the doctor, "I may have caught a chill." He heard himself describing every one of his symptoms, as if each were a special grievance.

The doctor heard him out. "I think it is just something I call bachelor's ailment," she said. "You ought to have a mistress, if only to give you something real to worry about." Perhaps she meant this kindly, but even a doctor can have curious motives, especially one who shows her gums when she laughs, and whose husband gets up early to avoid being alone with her. "Do you want to see someone at my clinic?"

"No. It will go away."

"Suit yourself."

He delivered his third lecture through a tight, cindery throat. The room was filled with students this time, smoking, fidgeting, reading, whispering. He wondered what they were doing indoors on a glowing day. They showed little interest and asked only a few of their puzzling questions. After the lecture a plump man who introduced himself as a journalist invited Piotr to the terrace of the Brasserie Balzar. He wore a nylon turtleneck pullover and blazer and a large chrome-plated watch. Piotr supposed that he must have been sent by Marek—one of his cousin's significant connections. The reporter drank beer. Piotr, whose vitals rejected even its

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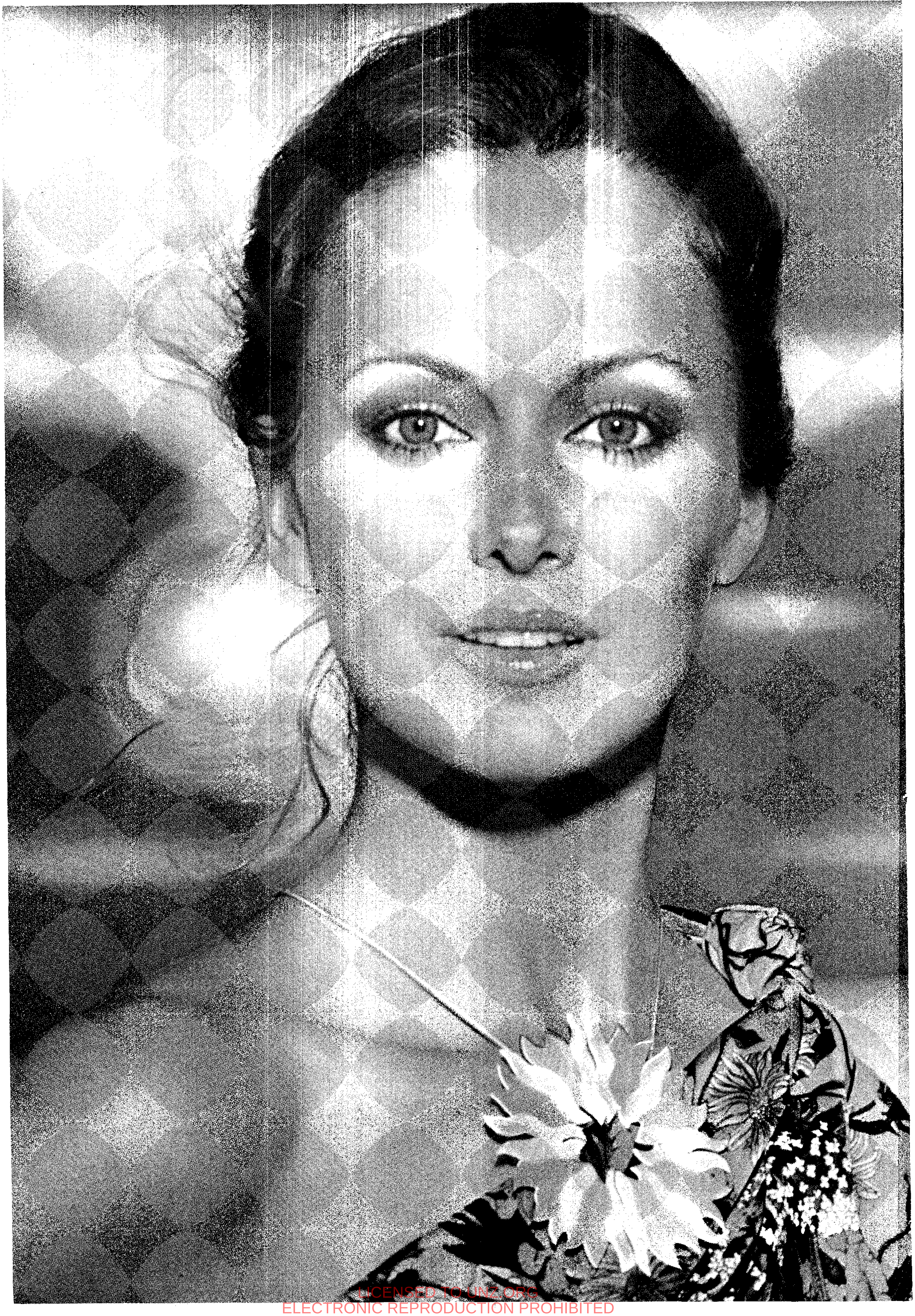

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smell now, had weak tea, and even his tea seemed aggressive.

The reporter had a long gulp of his beer and said, "Are you one of those rebel poets?"

"Not for a second," said Piotr fervently.

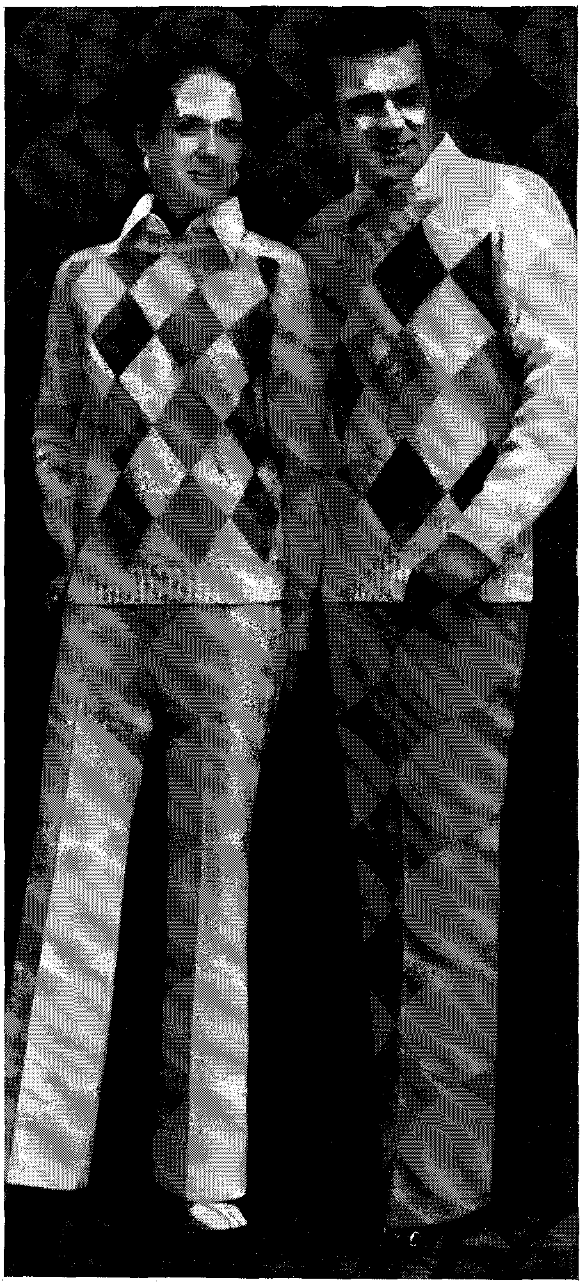
"What about the letter you sent to *Pravda* and that *Pravda* refused to print?"

"I have never written to *Pravda*," said Piotr.

The reporter scribbled away, using many more words than Piotr had. Piotr remarked, "I am not a Soviet poet. I am a Polish lecturer, officially invited by a French university."

At this the reporter wrote harder than ever, and then asked Piotr about the Warsaw Legia—which Piotr, after a moment of brick wall, was able to recognize as the name of a football team—and about its great star, Robert Gadocha, whom Piotr had never heard of at all. The reporter shook Piotr's hand and departed. Piotr meant to make a note of the strange meeting and to ask Marek about the man, but as he opened his pocket diary he saw something of far greater importance—today was the sixteenth of October, the feast day of St. Jadwiga. His hostess, whose name this was, had particularly wanted him to be there for dinner. He went to a Swiss film about a girl in love with a married dentist, slept comfortably until the renunciation scene, and remembered when he came out that he would have to bring his hostess a present. Buying flowers, he glanced across the shop and saw the Austrian. He was with an old woman—his mother, perhaps. She moved back and forth, pointing and laughing in a way Piotr took to be senile. As she bent her topknot over calla lilies Piotr saw the Austrian clearly. Oh, it was the same man, with the wide forehead and slight smile. He gave the babbling old woman all his attention and charm. But when he and Piotr stood side by side, each of them paying—one for lilies, one for roses—Piotr saw that he was older than the Austrian in the picture, and that his arms and shoulders were stiff, slightly paralyzed. The senile old mother was efficient and brisk; it was she who carried the flowers. The Austrian was back in Venice, where he belonged. Is that where I want him, Piotr wondered.

The entire apartment, even Piotr's part of it, smelled of food cooking. The doctor had waved and tinted her hair and darkened her lashes. Her husband was dressed in a dark suit and sombre tie. His gift to his wife, a pair of coral earrings, reposed on a velvet cushion on the dining-room table. The guests,



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remnants of the couple's old, happy days in the Resistance, sat stiffly, drinking French apéritifs. They were "little" Poles; Marek would not have known their names, or wished to. Their wives were French, so that the conversation was in French and merely polite. No one came in unexpectedly, as friends usually did for a name day. St. Jadwiga, incarnated in Paris, seemed to Piotr prim and middle-class. From Heaven his mind moved naturally to Venice, where he saw a white table and white chairs on the edge of a blue square. But perhaps Venice was quite other—perhaps it was all dark stone.

He had trouble swallowing his drink. A demon holding a pitchfork sat in his throat. Sometimes the pitchfork grazed his ear. The three men and Jadwiga soon slipped into Polish and reminiscences of the war. The French wives chatted to each other, and then the doctor drew their chairs close to the television set. She had been one of a delegation of doctors who that day had called on the Minister of Health; if they looked hard they might see a glimpse of her. All seven stared silently at the clock-face now occupying the screen. The seconds ticked over. As soon as the news began, the doctor's husband began closing the shutters and drawing the curtains. It was a noisy performance, and Piotr saw that the doctor had tears in her eyes. Piotr thought of how this sniping went on night after night, with guests or without. He stared at lights reflected on the glassy screen, like fragments of a planet. A clock on the marble mantel had hands that never moved. The mirror behind the clock was tipped at an angle, so that Piotr could see himself. His hostess, following her most important guest's gaze, cried that the clock worked perfectly; her husband kept forgetting to wind it! At this everyone smiled at Piotr, as if to say, "So that is what poets wonder about!"

Dinner was further delayed because of a television feuilleton everyone in the room except Piotr had been following for seventeen weeks. A girl named Vanessa had been accused of euthanasia on the person of her aunt, named Ingrid, who had left Vanessa a large fortune. Anthony, a police detective from the Sûreté whose role it was to bully Vanessa into a hysterical confession, was suspected by all in the room (save Piotr). Anthony was a widower. His young daughter, Samantha, had left home because she wanted to be a championship swimmer. Anthony was afraid Samantha would die of heart failure as her mother, Pamela, had. Samantha did not know that at the time of her mother's death there had been whispers about euthanasia. The detective's concern for Samantha's inherited weakness was proof to everyone (except Piotr) that he had been innocent of Pamela's death. The dead aunt's adopted son, Flavien, who had been contesting the will, and who had been the cause of poor Vanessa's incarceration in the Santé prison, now said he would not testify against her after all. Piotr's France, almost entirely out of literature, had given him people sensibly called Albertine, Berthe, Marcel, and Colette. This flowering of exotic names bewildered him, but he did not think it worth mentioning. He had a more precise thought, which was that if his throat infection turned out to be cancer it would remove the need for wondering about anything. He invented advice he would leave his children: "Never try to make an unhappy person happy. It is a waste of life, and you will defeat your own natural goodness." In the looking glass behind the stopped clock Piotr was ugly and old.

BEFORE going to sleep that night he read the account he had written of his love for Laurie. It had turned into a long wail, something for the ear, a babbling complaint. Describing Laurie, he had inevitably made two persons of her. Behind one girl—unbreakably jaunty, lacking only in imagination—came a smaller young woman who was fragile and untruthful and who loved out of fear. He had never sensed any fear in Laurie. He decided he would never write in that way about his life again.

He was pulled out of a long dream about airports by his own choked coughing. His left lung was on fire and a new pain, like an electric wire, ran along his arm to the tip of his little finger. He tried to suppress the coughing because another burst would kill him, and as he held his breath he felt a chain being forged, link by link, around his chest. The last two links met; the chain began to tighten. Before he could suffocate, a cough broke from him and severed the chain. He was shaking, covered in icy sweat. Panting, unable to raise himself on an elbow because of the pain, he gasped, "Help me." He may have fainted. The room was bright, the doctor bent over him. She swabbed his arm—he felt the cold liquid but not the injection. He wanted to stay alive. That overrode everything.

Piotr awoke fresh and rested, as

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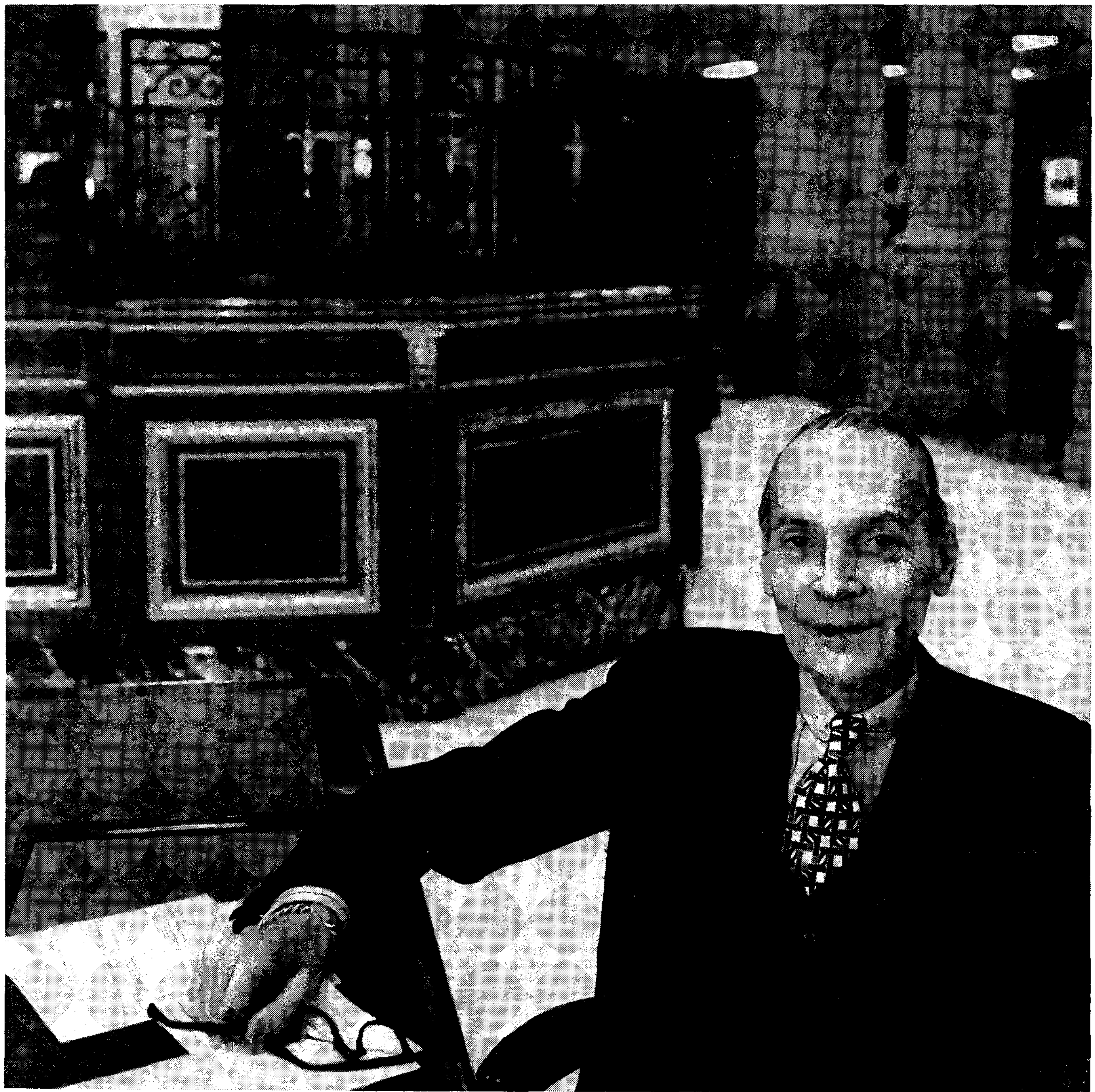

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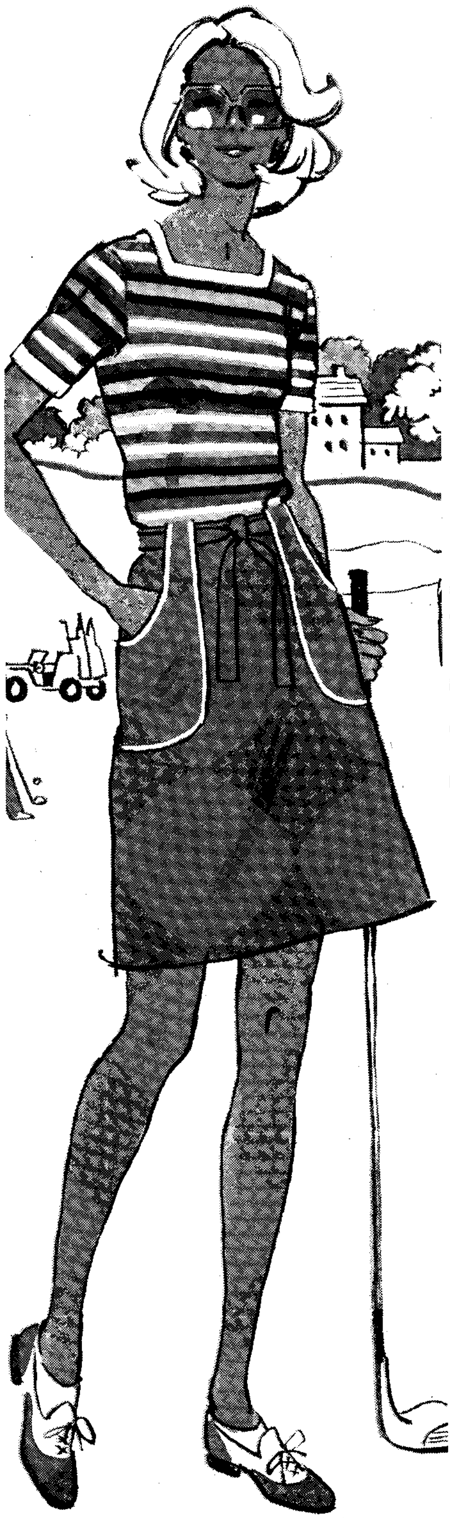

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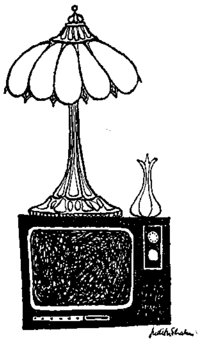
though nothing had happened in the night. Nevertheless he let his hostess make an appointment at her clinic. "I still think it is bachelor's ailment," she grumbled, but she spoke with a false gruffness that meant she might be unsure.

"It is a chill in the throat," he said. Oh, to be told there were only six weeks to live! To settle scores; leave nothing straggling; to go quietly. Everything had failed him: his work (because it inevitably fell short of his vision), his marriage, politics, and now, because of Laurie, he had learned something final about love. He had been to jail for *nothing, a poet for nothing,* in love for nothing. And yet, in the night, how desperately he had craved his life—his own life, not another's. Also, how shamefully frightened he had felt. Laurie had told him once that he was a coward.



"All married men of your kind are scared," she had said, calmly. This took place at the small table of one of the drugstores she favored. Piotr said he was not married, not really. "I'll tell you if you're married *and* scared," she said. She looked at him over a steaming coffee cup. "Supposing I bought a Matisse and gave it to you."

"How could you?"

"We're imagining. Say I went without a winter coat to buy you a Matisse."

"A Matisse what?"

"Anything. Signed."

"For a winter coat?"

"Can't you imagine anything, Potter? Your lovely Matisse arrives in Warsaw. You unwrap it. It is a present from me. You know that it comes with my love. It's the sign of love and of going without." The trouble was that he *could* see it. He could see himself unrolling the picture. It was the head of a woman. "Would you hang it up on the wall?"

"Of course."

"And tell people where it came from?"

"What people?"

"If your wife came to see you, what would you say?"

"That it came from Paris."

"From someone who loved you?"

"It isn't her business," said Piotr.

"You see?" said Laurie. "You'd never dare. You're just a married man, and a frightened one. As frightened as any. You're even scared of an *ex*-wife. The day you can tell her where your Matisse came from, the day you say, 'I'm proud that any girl ever could have loved me that much,' then you'll know you've stopped being a scared little guy."

The Matisse was as real to him now as the car in which she had rushed away from the airport. Laurie could never in a lifetime have bought a Matisse. "Matisse" was only a name, the symbol of something famous and costly. She could accuse Piotr of fear because she was not certain what fear was; at least, she had never been frightened. Piotr thought this over coolly. Her voice, which had sung in his mind since her departure, suddenly left him. It had died on the last words, "scared little guy."

"How silent my life will be now," Piotr said to himself. Yet it seemed to him that his anguish was diminishing, leaving behind it only the faint, daily anxiety any man can endure. A few days later he actually felt slow happiness, like water rising, like a tide edging in. He sat drinking black tea with Maria in her cramped little flat full of bric-a-brac and sagging divans. He saw sun on a window box and felt the slow tide. Maria was talking about men and women. She used books for her examples and the names of characters in novels as if they were friends: "Anna lived on such a level of idiocy, really." "If Natasha had not had all those children . . ." "Lavretsky was too resigned." Piotr decided this might be the soundest way of getting at the truth. Experience had never brought him near to the truth about anything. If he had fled Warsaw, forsaken his children, tried to live with Laurie, been abandoned by her, he would have been washed up in rooms like Maria's. He would have remembered to put clean sheets on the bed when he had a new girl in the offing, given tea to visitors from the home country, quoted from authors, spoken comic-sounding French and increasingly old-fashioned Polish until everyone but a handful of other émigrés had left him behind.

At ten in the morning, by appointment, Piotr arrived at the clinic where his hostess had her office. She had drawn a map and had repeated her instructions in every form except Braille. The clinic was a nineteenth-century brick house, miles from a Métro stop and unknown to buses. He approached it through streets of condemned houses with empty windows. A nurse directed him out to a mossy yard that smelled of mushrooms, and across to a low, shabby building, where the dim light, the atmosphere of dread and of waiting, the smell of ether and of carbolic were like any prison infirmary on inspection day. He joined a

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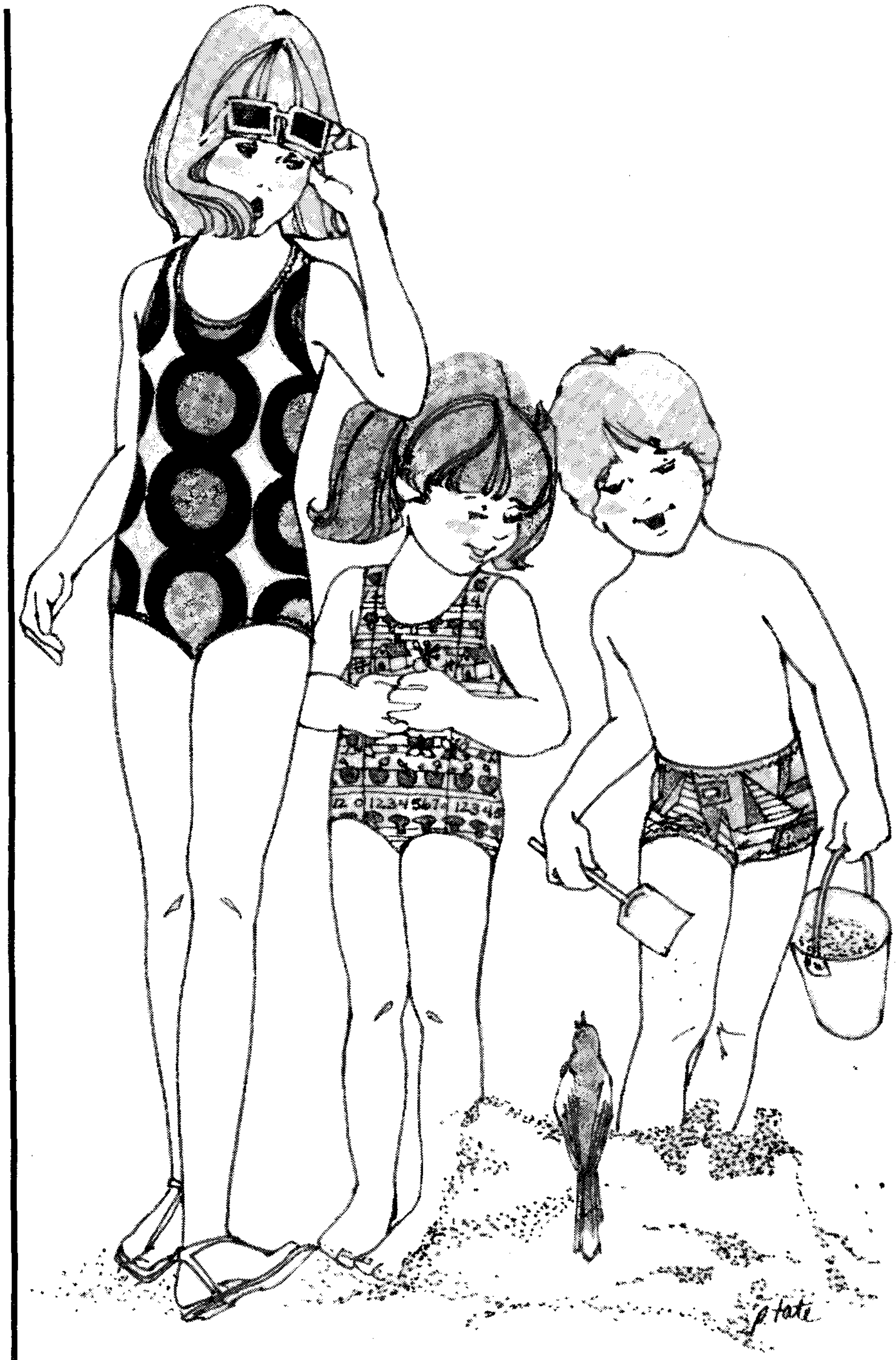

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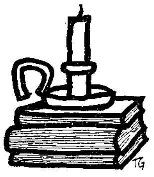
dozen women and one other man sitting around the four sides of a room. A kitchen table, dead center, held last winter's magazines. No one looked at these except Piotr, who tiptoed to the table and back. The room was so silent that he could hear one of the women swallowing saliva. Then from next door came the sound of thuds and iron locks. His prison memories, reviving easily, said, Someone is dying. They have gone out, all of them, and left a prisoner to die alone.

"My throat," he rehearsed. "I have no fever, no other symptoms, nothing seriously the matter, *nothing but an incurable* cancer of the throat."



A few mornings later his hostess knocked at the bedroom door and came in without waiting. His pajama jacket was undone. He groped for his glasses and put them on, as if they dressed him. The doctor placed a small glass tube filled with pink tablets on the night table.

"I still think it is bachelor's ailment," she said. "But if the pain should leave your throat, where you seem to want it to be, and you feel something here," placing an impudent hand on his chest, "take two of these half an hour apart. As soon as you get back to Warsaw, go into hospital for serious tests. I'll give you your dossier before you leave, with a letter for your doctor."

"What is it?"

"Just do as I tell you. It isn't serious."

"I'll imagine the worst," said Piotr.

"Imagining the worst protects you from it."

The worst was not a final illness; it was still a Venice built of white stone, with white bridges and statues. On a snowy street Laurie studied the menu outside a restaurant. Hand in hand with the Austrian, she said, "I'd rather go home and make love." Piotr's hand closed around the vial of pills. He guessed that the medicine was a placebo, but it could be a remedy for the worst. A placebo might accidentally attack the secret enemy that, unknown to the most alert and intelligent doctors in Paris, was slowly killing Piotr.

THE worst, as always, turned out to be something simple. The French teacher sent to Poland in exchange for Piotr had wandered from her subject. Finding her students materialistic and coarsely bourgeois, she had tried to fire them with revolutionary ideals and had been expelled from the country. In retaliation, Piotr was banished from France. Marek accompanied his cousin to police headquarters. He seemed as helpless as Piotr and for once had no solutions. Piotr received a five-day reprieve to wind up his affairs. He would not give another lecture, and unless Laurie came back he would never see her again. Marek questioned him—grilled him, in fact: Who was the reporter he had talked to at the Balzar? Could Piotr describe him? Was he a Pole, an American? What about the pregnant girl—had Piotr offended her, had he made foolish and un*translatable jokes during that* day's lecture? Piotr answered patiently, but Marek was not satisfied. There must have been Someone, he said, meaning the shadowy Someone who dogged their lives, who fed émigré fears and fantasies. In Marek's experience Someone always turned out to have a name, to be traceable. When, barely two days later, Someone informed Piotr that he had violated his agreement (that is, he was leaving) and therefore would not receive any money, he gazed at the unreadable signature and knew for certain that no human brain could be behind this; it was entirely the work of some bureaucratic machine performing on its own. Marek continued to grumble and to speculate about Someone, while Piotr settled for the machine. It was a restful solution and one he had learned to live with.

Except for his debt to Marek, which he now had no means of repaying, Piotr had no regrets about leaving. He seemed to have been sleeping in the doctor's old office forever, hearing her wounded voice in the night, assaulted by the strident news broadcast at six, measuring the size of today's stone in his chest, opening the shutters to a merciless sky, thinking of the mailbox and the key and the message from Laurie. Piotr suddenly realized that he had gone in and out of the house twice that day without looking for a letter. That was freedom! It was like the return to life after a long illness, like his wife feeding him smuggled soup out of a jar and saying, "You *will* get better." When he called Maria to say goodbye, she took the news of his leaving calmly. Piotr was only another novel. She turned the pages slowly. Sometimes in novels there is bound to be a shock. She invited him to tea, as though he had just arrived and their best conversations were yet to come. On his way to this last visit Piotr forced himself to look in the letter box, out of distant sympathy for the victim he had once been. Inside, propped at an angle, was a view of San Pietro in Venice and a message in Laurie's childish hand, with the inevitable spelling mistake:

> It is over.
> My friend and I seperating forever.
> It is you I love.
> Back Monday 8 pm. Please meet chez moi.

"Love" was underlined three times.

Piotr had been condemned to death by hanging but now the blindfold was removed. He descended the gallows steps to perfect safety. The hangman untied his hands, lit his cigarette. He was given a passport good for all countries and for eternity. His first poems had just been published. He had fallen in love and she loved him, she was "really chearfull," and love, love, love was underlined three times. Today was Monday; there were still four hours to wait. The courtyard and the dull street beyond it became as white as Piotr's imagined Venice. He stood in the transformed street and said to himself that he was forty-three and that at last, for the first time, a woman had given something up for him. Laurie had turned from the person who provided travel, friendship, warmth, material help (somebody was certainly paying for the seventh-floor studio) for the sake of Piotr. She had done it without asking him to underwrite her risk, without a guarantee. Now he understood the fable about the Matisse, about loving and doing without.

He began to walk slowly toward a bus stop. Now, think about this, he told himself. She is alone except for that one brother who never writes. She has no training, no real education to speak of, and no money, and money is oxygen here in the West. Well, she has me, he thought. She has only me, and she could have anyone. The feeling that her silvery world depended on him now made it all the more mysterious and desirable. Now, be practical, he said. Now, be practical. . . . But he did not know what to be practical about; it was part of his new, thrilling role as Laurie's protector. What next? Piotr was separated, not divorced. He would return to Warsaw, divorce his wife, come back to France, and marry Laurie. He wondered how he had been so obtuse until now, why he had not thought of this sooner. Laurie had never mentioned any such arrangement—another proof of her generosity. He would apply for a post in France, perhaps at a provincial university. He would read poetry aloud to the wives of doctors and notaries and they would

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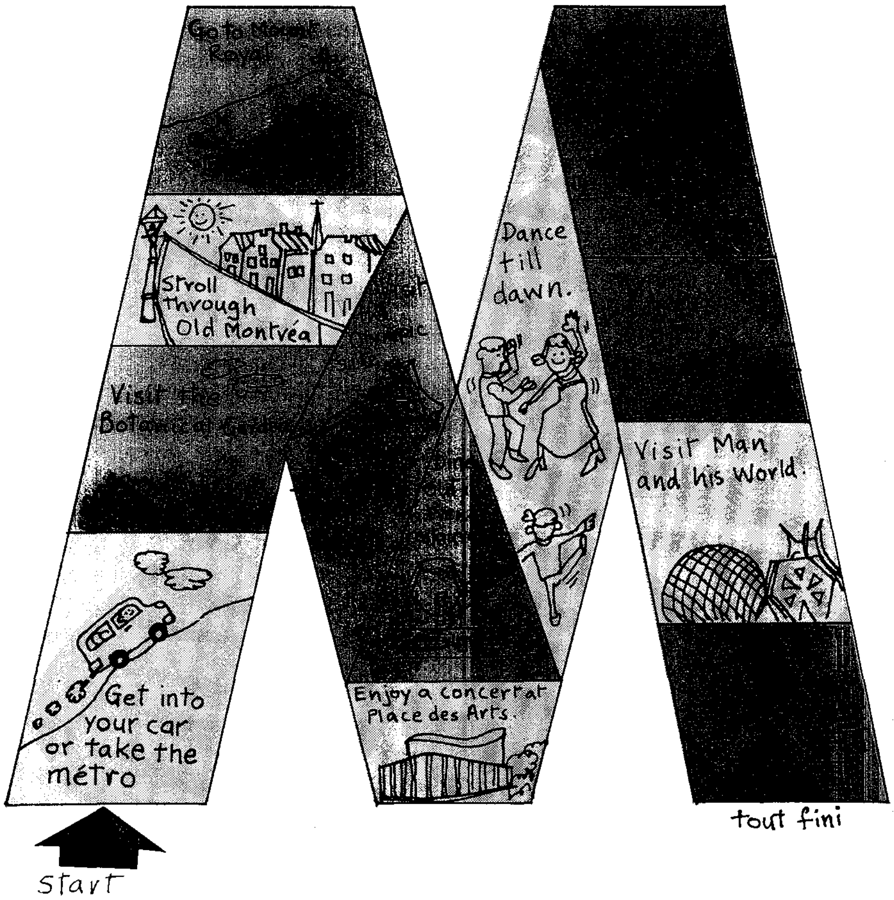
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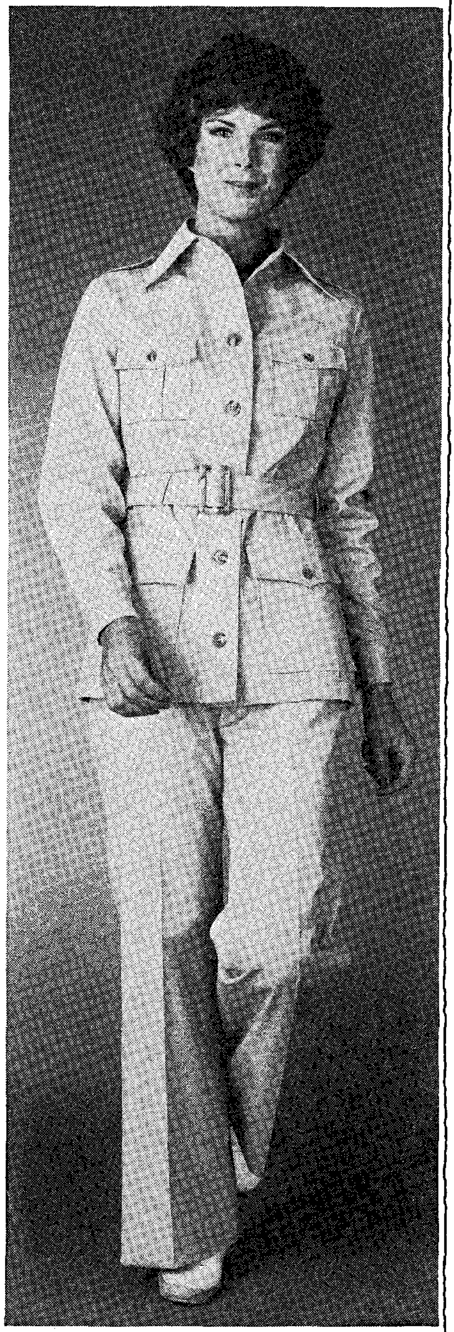

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imagine he had escaped from Siberia and it was Russian they were hearing.

Piotr had forgotten that he was expelled, might never be allowed out of Poland or back into France in his lifetime, that he owed money to Marek, that he was entangled, hobbled, bound. His children became remote and silent, as if they had never existed outside their father's imagination.

Piotr, who never discussed his private affairs, told Maria about Laurie. His account of the long journey leading up to the arrival of the postcard, and Maria's reaction to it, created a third person in the room. She was a quiet, noble girl who without a trace of moral blackmail had traded safety for love. "She is the wonderful woman you deserve," said Maria, listening intently. Before bliss submerged him completely Piotr was able to see Maria and himself as two figures bobbing in the wake of a wreck. Their hopefulness about love had survived prisons. And yet every word he was saying seemed to him like part of a long truth. His new Laurie resembled the imaginary Matisse she had sent to Warsaw, which he had unrolled with wonder and admiration: she was motionless, mute, she was black-on-white, and she never looked at him.

"Promise me one thing," said Maria. "That you will not ask her any questions. Promise." He promised. Leaning forward, she took Piotr's face in her hands and kissed him. "I wish you so much happiness," she said.

HIS unpacked suitcase at his feet, Piotr sat on the edge of the bed. Laurie lay on her side, her head on her arm. The ashtray between them did not prevent her from sprinkling the white coverlet with ash. She had been under the shower when he arrived and she still wore a towelling bathrobe. Her hair, damp and darkened, lay flat on her neck and cheek and gave her a tight, sleek, unknown quality.

"Oh, it was all right when we were tramping around looking at those damned churches," she said. "But right from the beginning I knew it was going wrong. I felt something in him—a sort of disapproval of me. Everything he'd liked until now he started to criticize. Those Catholics—they always go back to what they were. Sex was wrong, living was wrong. Only God was O.K. He said why didn't I work, why didn't I start training to be a nurse. He said there was a world shortage of nurses. 'You could be having a useful life,' he said. It was horrible, Potter. I just don't know what went wrong. I thought maybe he'd met a girl he liked better than me. I kept fishing, but he wouldn't say. He was comparing—I could tell that. He said, 'All *you* ever think about is your lunch and your breakfast'—something like that."

Piotr said, "What is the business he so enjoys running?"

"Watch straps."

"Watch straps?"

"That's what he was doing in Italy. Buying them. We were in Florence, Milan. Venice was the holiday part. You should have seen the currency he smuggled in—Swiss, American. The stuff was falling out of his pockets like oak leaves. His mind was somewhere else the whole time. We weren't really together. We were just two travellers who happened to be sharing a room."

"You didn't happen to find yourself in the same bed?" said Piotr. He moved the ashtray out of the way and edged a box of paper handkerchiefs into its place. Although her face did not crumple or her voice change, tears were forming and spilling along her cheek and nose.

"Oh, sometimes, after a good dinner. He said a horrible thing. He said, 'Sometimes I can't bear to touch you.' No, no, we were just two travellers," she said, blowing her nose. "We each had our own toothpaste, he had his cake of soap. I didn't bring any soap and when we were moving around, changing hotels, he'd pack his before I'd even had my bath. I'd be there in the bathtub and he'd already packed his soap. He'd always been nice before. I just don't know. I'll never understand it. Potter, I can't face going out. I haven't eaten all day, but I still can't face it. Could you just heat some water and pour it over a soup cube for me?"

"Watch straps," said Piotr in a language she could not understand. He turned on the little electric plate. "Watch straps."

"He pretended he was doing it for me," said Laurie, lying flat on her back now. "Letting me go so I could create my own life. Those Catholics. He just wanted to be free for some other reason. To create his, I suppose."

"Is he still young enough for that?" said Piotr. "To create a whole life?"

"He's younger than you are, if that's young."

"I thought it might have been a much older person," said Piotr. "Your

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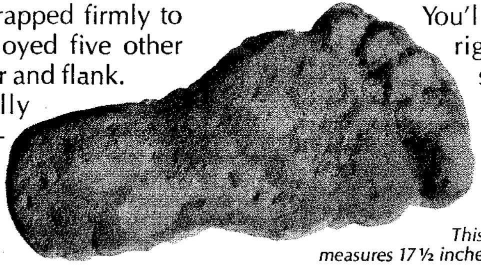
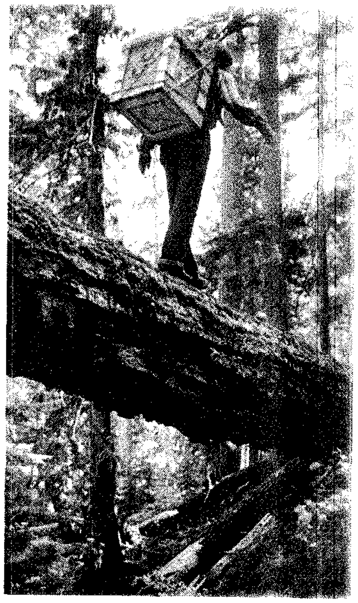


This plaster cast of a Bigfoot print measures 17½ inches in length, 7 inches in width.

[illegible] YEARS OLD. IMPORTED IN BOTTLE FROM CANADA BY HIRAM WALKER IMPORTERS INC., DETROIT, MICH. 86.8 PROOF. BLENDED CANADIAN WHISKY. © 1977



A fallen Douglas fir [illegible] handy bridge across [illegible] mountain stream.

miles as the eagle flies from his mountain's frigid peak to an eerie pile of broken green rocks.

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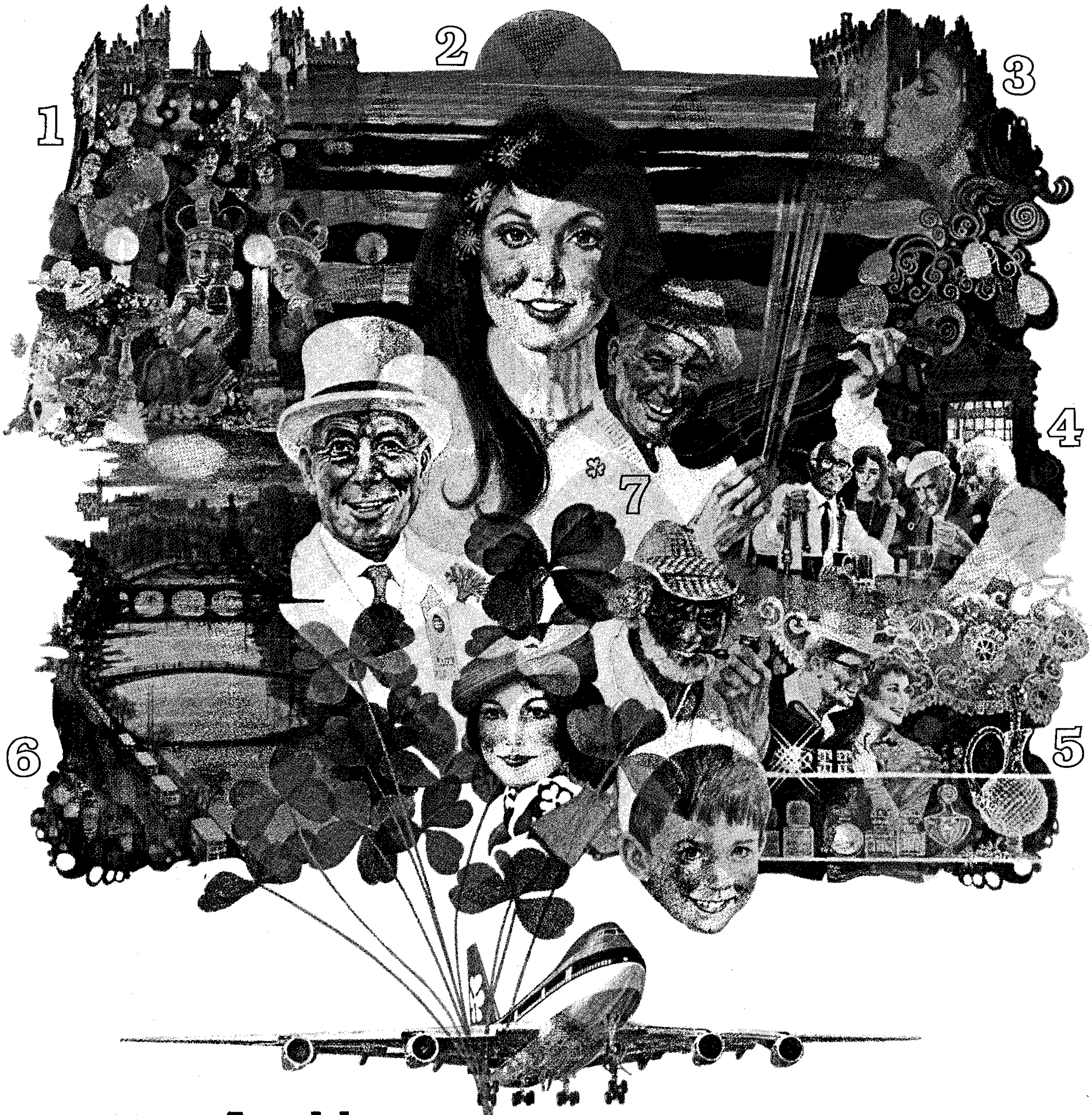

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first friend of all. He took you home for holidays, out of Bishop Purse."

"*That* one. No-o-o. What finally happened with *him* was, his wife got sick. She got this awful facial neuralgia. It made a saint out of him. Believe me, Potter, when you get mixed up with a married man you're mixed up with his wife, too. They work as a team. Even when she doesn't know, she knows. It's an inside job. They went all over the place seeing new doctors. She used to scream with pain in hotel rooms. It's the sickness of unhappy wives—did you know?"

"I know about the ailment of bachelors. I thought you said it was the Venice person"—he was about to say "the Austrian"—"who knew you when you were young."

"Everybody got me young, when it comes to that. Oh," she said, suddenly alert, sitting up, dry-eyed, "don't sit there looking superior."

"I am standing," said Piotr. "I am here like a dog on its hind legs with a bowl of soup."

She took the bowl, with a scowl that would have meant ingratitude had its source been anything but mortification. "Well," she said abruptly, "I couldn't count on you, could I? You come and go and you've got those children. Who do they live with?"

"Their mother."

A tremor, like a chill, ran over her, and he recalled how she had trembled and spilled her coffee long ago. "How old are they?"

"Twelve and six."

"Why did you have the second one?" (Her first sensible observation.) "Girls?"

"Two boys."

"I hope they die."

"I don't," said Piotr.

"Do they love you?"

He hesitated; where love was concerned he had lost his bearings. He said, "They seem to eat up love and wait for more."

"Is there always more?"

"So far."

"They're like me, then," said Laurie.

"No, for children it is real food. It adds to their bones."

"Then it's not like me. I soak it up and it disappears and I feel undernourished. Do they like you?"

"They are excited and happy when they see me but hardly notice when I go."

"That's because you bring them presents." She began to cry, hard this time. "They won't need you much longer. They've got their mother. I

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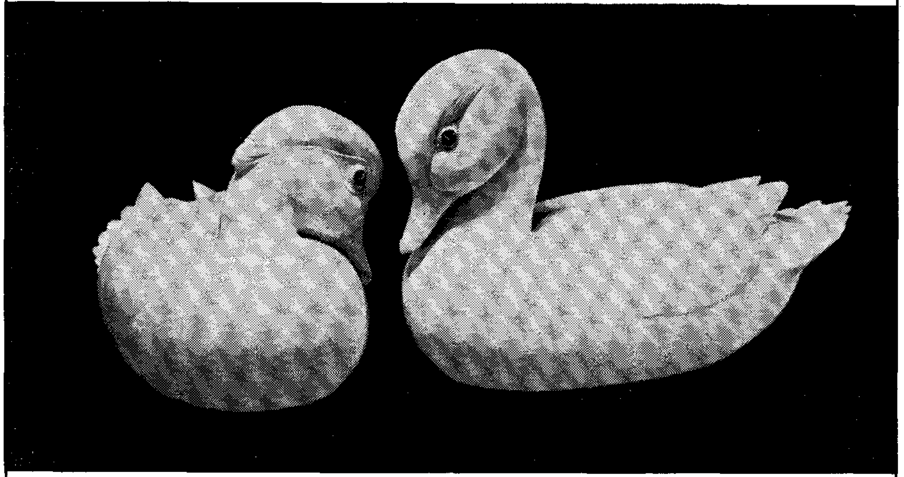

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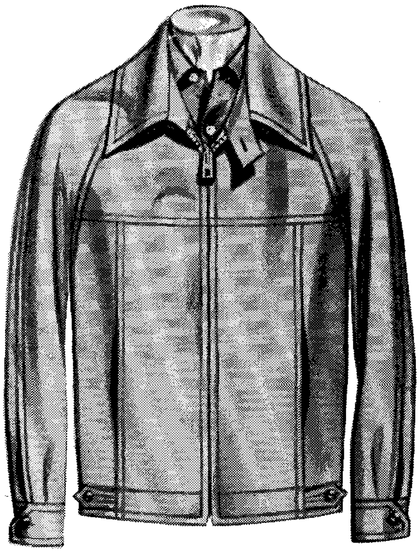

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really need you. I need you more than they do. I need any man more than his children do."

Piotr found sheets in the wardrobe and made the bed; he found pajamas in one of her plastic boxes, and the Polish sleeping potion in the bathroom. He counted out the magic drops. "Now sleep," he said. Something was missing: "Where is your white watch?"

"I don't know. I must have lost it. I lost it ages ago," she said, and turned on her side.

Piotr hung up Laurie's bathrobe and emptied the ashtray. He rinsed the yellow bowl and put it back on the shelf. He still had to break the news of his going; he did not feel banished but rather as if it were he who had decided to leave, who had established his own fate. Who gave you the "Palmstroem" poems, said Piotr silently. Another Potter? The man who had you at fifteen and then shipped you to Europe when you started getting in his way? Was it the Austrian? The man in Venice who suddenly feels he is sinning and can't bear to touch you? At the back of his mind was a small, anxious, jealous Piotr, for whom he felt little sympathy.

Laurie, though fresh from a shower, had about her a slightly sour smell, the scent that shock and terror produce on the skin. She was young, so that it was no worse than fresh yeast, or the odor of bread rising—the aura of the living, not yet of the dead. He remembered his wife and how her skin, then her voice, then her mind had become acid. "Am I plain?" she had said. "Am I diseased? Don't you consider me a normal woman?" You are good, you are brave, you are an impeccable mother to your children, but I don't want you, at least not the way you want me to, had been his answer. And so she became ugly, ill, haunted—all that he dreaded in women. It seemed to him that he saw the first trace of this change in the sleeping Laurie. She had lost her credentials, her seal of aristocracy. She had dropped to a lower division inhabited by Piotr's wife and Piotr himself; they were inferiors, unable to command loyalty or fidelity or even consideration in exchange for passion. Her silvery world, which had reflected nothing but Piotr's desperate inventions, floated and sank in Venice. This is what people like Maria and me are up against, he thought—our inventions. We belong either in books or in prison, out of the way. Romantic people are a threat to civilization. That man in Venice who wanted to make a nurse of poor Laurie was a romantic, too, a dangerous lunatic.

Laurie lay breathing deeply and slowly, in a sleep full of colored dreams—dreams of an imaginary Matisse, a real Lake Constance, a real Venice, dark and sad. "On a sailing holiday at Lake Constance . . ." Even now, when it no longer mattered, the truth of this particular dream clamped on Piotr's chest like the ghost of an old pain. Quietly, in order not to disturb her, he took one of his pink placebos. He thought of how frightened she would be if she woke to find him in the grip of an attack—she would be frightened of nearly everything now. He could still see the car hurtling all over the map as Laurie tried to run away from him and what she called "the situation." He could see it even though the journey had been only in her imagination, then in his. She had flown to Zurich, probably, and been met by, certainly, the man whose business was watch straps, or even . . . It doesn't matter now, he said. She had been telling the truth, because her mind had been in flight.

He lay down beside her and, reaching out, switched off the light. The pattern of reflected street lights that sprang to life on the ceiling had, for three nights long ago, been like the vault of heaven. After tonight Laurie would watch it alone—at any rate, without Piotr. Poor Laurie, he thought. Poor, poor Laurie. He felt affection, kindness—less than he could feel for his children, less than the obligation he still owed his wife. Out of compassion he stroked her darkened hair. No one but Piotr himself could have taken the measure of his disappointment as he said, So there really was nothing in it, was there? So this was all it ever was—only tenderness. An immense weight of blame crushed him, flattened him, and by so doing cleansed and absolved him. I was incapable of any more feeling than this. I never felt more than kindness. There was nothing in it from the beginning. It was only tenderness, after all.

—MAVIS GALLANT

●

To skate, the figure skaters must have ice. At the Hartford Civic Center that means master chef Charles J. Miller Jr., operations director, must get together his ingredients for a smooth ice surface.

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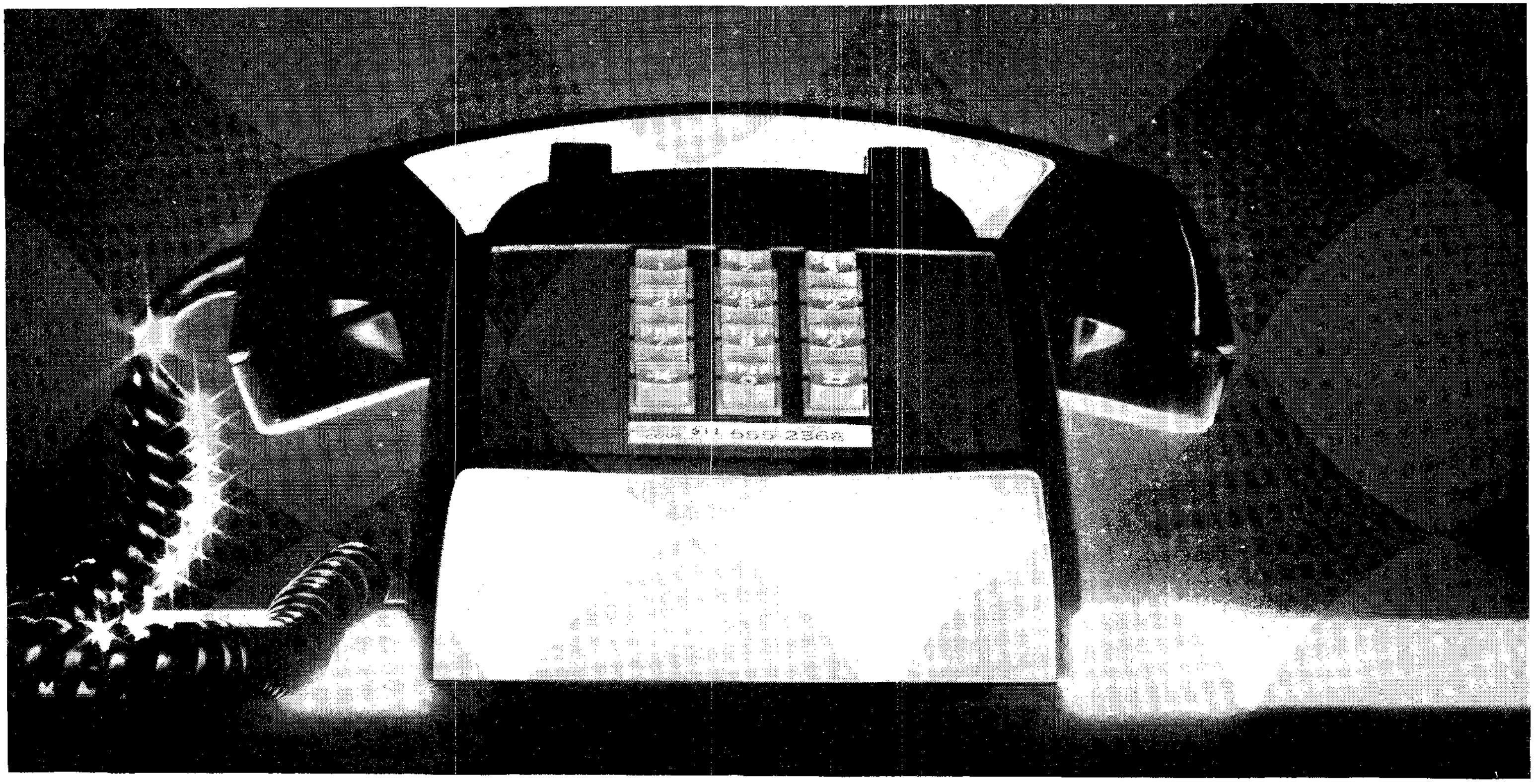

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THE THEATRE

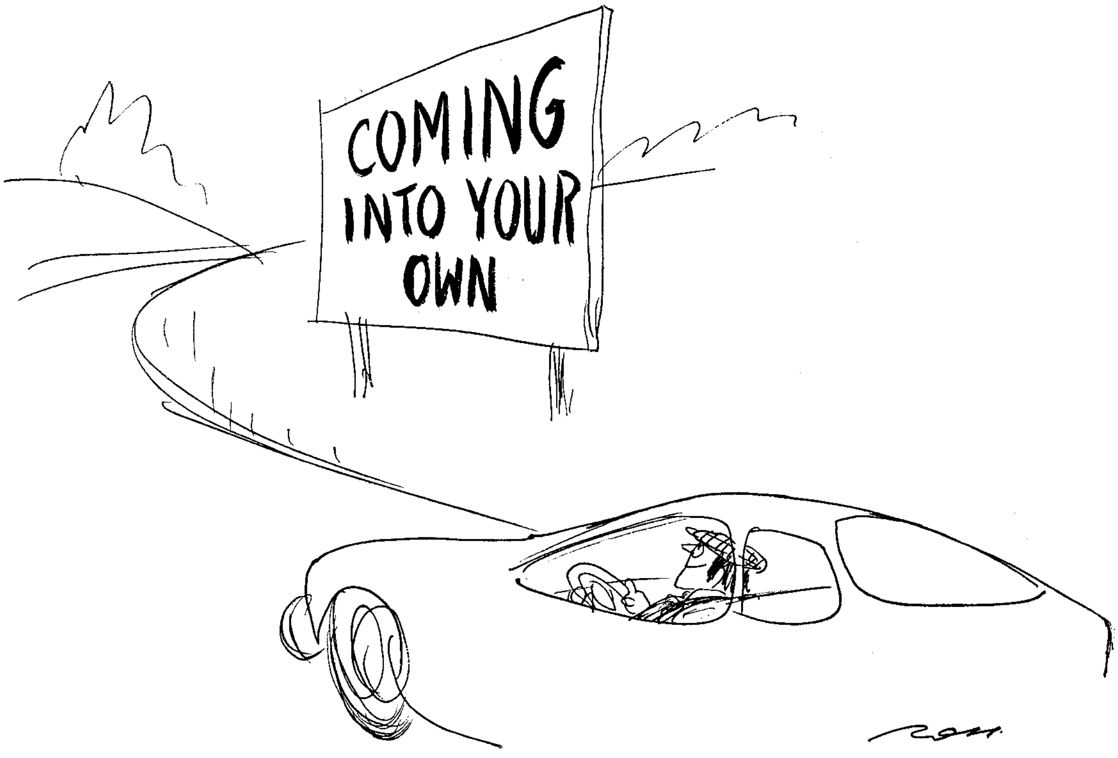
OFF BROADWAY

"THE TRANSFIGURATION OF BENNO BLIMPIE," the second and longer of two plays called "Monsters," at the Astor Place, is a grotesque, obscene, funny, and serious play by Albert Innaurato. At the opening, we see an enormous man in a sweat-stained shirt sitting on a platform above the stage. He announces that he is Benno and that he is eating himself to death. He remains on the platform from beginning to end as the history of his life is played out in scene after scene below—Benno speaking first in a little boy's voice, later as an adolescent, and finally as a man. Always looking down, he is always attentive, but in a sense invisible in the action going on around him. He is deliberately disgusting as he tells of the number of ice-cream cones he has licked or the number of snails he has crushed with his bare feet—even more disgusting and horrifying to himself than he is to his puzzled family. They are poor Italian-Americans who cannot understand why this freak has been inflicted upon them and have no idea how to treat him except with a sort of frayed patience or with insulting jokes or downright cruelty and scorn. When he lifts a cleaver, at the end, and tells us that he is about to eat himself, the idea of self-slaughter comes as no shock, since he has been bleeding figuratively for himself and everyone around him throughout the play. As a child, he watches in terror his grandfather skidding into mortal danger at the hands of a lustful, nasty, dirty little Irish-American girl of thirteen. He listens, sharing his mother's agony, as, dressed in a skimpy black dress and seated at a kitchen table, she pours out in an embittered monologue her reluctance to attend her father-in-law's wake with her monstrous son in tow and reviews the merciless grind of her miserable marriage, crying, pulling herself together, and then responding just as mercilessly to his tentative, comforting words, saying "Pig—oink oink oink" at one point and "dinosaur" at another. She is sharp-tongued, foulmouthed, and tragic, and she is totally believable as acted by Rosemary De Angelis. Much of the play is a matter of monologues, with Benno speaking directly to the audience. Breaking out of his little-boy voice, he tells of visiting a museum and discovering Renaissance painting, then of starting to draw on his own, convinced for a while that beauty is enough. But it is not; it makes no difference—he is as trapped as ever. When, near the end, he describes his longing for love and sex, which culminates in a horrible sexual attack by three boys in a school playground, he recalls the sudden feeling, lying there battered, of breaking free of his body and his pain—"and that is what I call the transfiguration of Benno Blimpie." The religious image may be justified, for all I know.

James Coco's performance in the title role is in itself a miracle—the most distinguished performance of his distinguished career. The others—Peter Carew as the grandfather, K. McKenna as the predatory child, and Roger Serbagi as the father—are good, too, Miss McKenna especially so. The play was done originally at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference, in Waterford, Connecticut, where I first saw it in 1973.

In "Side Show," by William Dews, which serves as a curtain raiser, a pair of Siamese twins at (and on) a table set for a birthday party, with the bodies of their exploitive father and mother shrouded in bloody sheets at either end, review their sideshow career from the cradle to the grave. The play, which is Grand Guignol, is harsh and clever, and it is cleverly done in vaudeville style by Robert Drivas and Richard De Fabees, to the accompaniment of snatches of calliope music. It is also, and for all its merits, the worst possible choice as an opener. The similarity of their themes tends to take the edge off "Benno Blimpie" and to make "Side Show" seem more trivial than it may actually be. Mr. Drivas directed both plays. Sets and costumes by Rubén de Saavedra. Lighting by Ian Calderon.

EDNA O'BRIEN'S "The Gathering," at the Manhattan Theatre Club through March 27th, is set in a farmhouse in the south of Ireland, where, as the play opens, an elderly couple named O'Shea are waiting for their three grown daughters and a grown son and his wife to come home for a fiftieth wedding celebration. The farm, we learn, is no longer the O'Sheas' but the bank's; they are wiped out financially, but they are determined to keep that a secret until the reunion is over. One by one, the sisters and brother arrive, and it soon becomes evident that "The Gathering" is about family feelings—the feelings of this family, at any rate. The few remnants of tenderness and affection that still exist are all but engulfed by old jealousies and rivalries and grudges that rise to the



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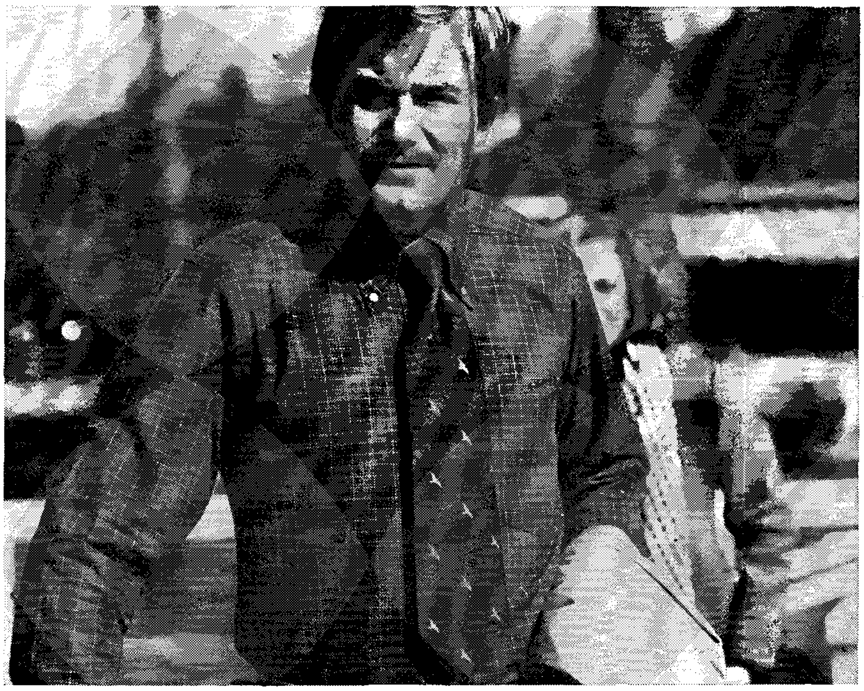

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surface, still as fresh as ever and all the more venomous for having been buried so long. By the time a disastrous day and evening are over, Miss O'Brien has made clear that it doesn't much matter that the farm is gone; so is the family. The ties have been cut, and only the father and mother, for all their bickering and quarrelling, still belong together. It could also be said that although the characters are well enough drawn—every word that each of them speaks being his and his alone—they and their predicaments are not particularly dramatic. There is scarcely a play here at all.

The principal—actually, the focal—character is the daughter Emer, a divorced writer from London, whose most recent lover has just deserted her, and who has returned somewhat reluctantly to Ireland in the hope of finding a temporary haven. But even her mother, whom she loves, turns against her after discovering that she is a lapsed Catholic and a "sinner." Maria Tucci, as usual, is very good as this sad, witty young woman. All the performances are at least satisfactory, and some are better than that. Under the direction of Austin Pendleton, every shift in mood and the ebb and flow of emotion are made clear. There is also some ebb and flow of brogue, but the characters do seem to belong to the same family, which is all to the good. Jane Cronin is put-upon Mother, Louis Zorich is rough, spiteful Father, Sloane Shelton is unhappy Peg, Nancy Donohue is smug Helen, Alan Mixon is weak Teddy, and Barbara eda-Young is his bitchy wife. Set by Patricia Woodridge.

"STARTING HERE, STARTING NOW," at the Barbarann Theatre Restaurant, is not, as billed, "a new musical revue"—nothing like "Tuscaloosa's Calling Me," for example, or "What's a Nice Country Like You Doing in a State Like This?," both of which also opened at saloons. It is a program of the bright, agreeable songs of Richard Maltby, Jr. (lyrics), and David Shire (music), very well sung—but with a minimum of performance—by Margery Cohen, Loni Ackerman, and George Lee Andrews. I enjoyed the evening, but I felt I had strayed several miles off my beat.

—EDITH OLIVER

•

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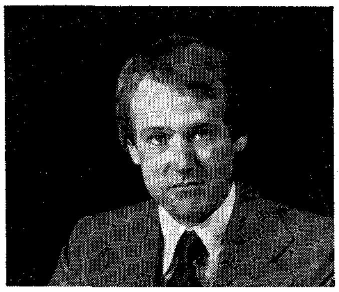

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THE RACE TRACK

A Hunch That Clicked

THE Swift Stakes, for three-year-olds, at six furlongs—the first of four stakes at Aqueduct leading up to the Classics—was a rather tame affair last Saturday. A colt named Hunch, winner of the Michigan Futurity last year, who isn't entered for the Kentucky Derby but is for the Preakness Stakes, coasted home four lengths ahead of Silk Heriz, who was a twenty-six-to-one shot—the longest odds in the race. The time over the weatherized track was 1:09⅗. I suppose because Hunch won his last three starts, the crowd of almost twenty-eight thousand had made him an even-money favorite. By the way, in case you haven't heard, post time for the first race at the Big A is now 1:30 P.M.

THE Race of the Week, of course, was Seattle Slew's first gallop under colors as a three-year-old. He was the top two-year-old of last season, and is the present, probably short-priced early favorite for the Kentucky Derby. The gallop took place on the second day of the Hialeah meeting, and from all accounts it was a remarkable performance by Mrs. Karen Taylor's handsome dark-bay colt. Coming out in a run-of-the-mill overnight race, with the usual sort of runners you'd find in such an event, he took the lead shortly after the start and went on to win by nine lengths. Cruguet, who rode him, looked back at the seven other starters as he rolled down the stretch to a seven-furlong track record of 1:20⅗. The old mark was 1:21. The colt ran the first quarter in 0:22⅕, the half mile in 0:44, and six furlongs in 1:08 (the track record for six furlongs is 1:08⅗), and he was eased up as he passed the winning post. As the 1:20⅗ went up on the odds board, I'm sure at least one of the watchers in the stand must have muttered to himself, "Another Secretariat." It was generally agreed by observers that Cruguet did no more than let his mount run, so I wonder how fast Seattle Slew would have gone if he'd been pressed. It was reported later that he was as relaxed after the race as if he'd merely done a slow workout, and that he had polished off his supper down to the last oat. Billy Turner, the red-headed former jumping-race rider who trains him, was at Aqueduct last Saturday. He said that the colt is coming here, and that he might skip the Flamingo Stakes at Hialeah on March 26th in favor of the Bay Shore Stakes at the Big A the same afternoon, which will be good news to trainers with three-year-olds at Hialeah. Hialeah opened with a bang, with a crowd of twenty-two thousand. It had one of nearly seventeen thousand last Saturday for the Seminole Handicap, won by Strike Me Lucky, who this time paid only a five-dollar mutuel.

THE day before Hialeah opened, Gulfstream Park closed, with the running of the Florida Derby and the usual accompanying Derby hoopla. This year, the race was split. C. V. Whitney's Coined Silver won the first division, after racing Nearly On Time down in the homestretch. Ruth Perlmutter's Ruthie's Native ran too fast for For The Moment in the second division. Coined Silver's time for the nine furlongs was 1:48⅘, a second and two-fifths faster than the time of Ruthie's Native. Despite the inclement weather early in the meeting, Gulfstream Park didn't do too badly financially; the total attendance was 633,776 and the betting $71,292,175. Last year, the attendance was 656,729 and the betting $65,415,720.

THERE seem to be a lot of three-year-olds around, and a lot of optimistic owners. A record number of horses—two hundred and ninety-seven—has been entered for the Kentucky Derby on May 7th. Then, there are two hundred and thirty-one entries for the Preakness Stakes on May 21st. Nominations for the Belmont Stakes on June 11th—the third race for the Triple Crown—will be announced shortly.

A BELATED NOTE ON THE SANTA ANITA HANDICAP: A crowd of 68,516 bet $7,495,388 for the entire day, and $1,075,563 on the big race. Wrong Horse Harry says, "What price a seven-million day at Aqueduct?"

—AUDAX MINOR

•

The Douglas Arts and Humanities Assn. has been working to restore the theater, which McGettigan had planned to donate to the group. However, he told City Planner Bill Costello that he would tear down the structure if it was declared unstructurally sound.—*Tucson (Ariz.) Arizona Daily Star.*

By Jove! A new phrase for the critics!

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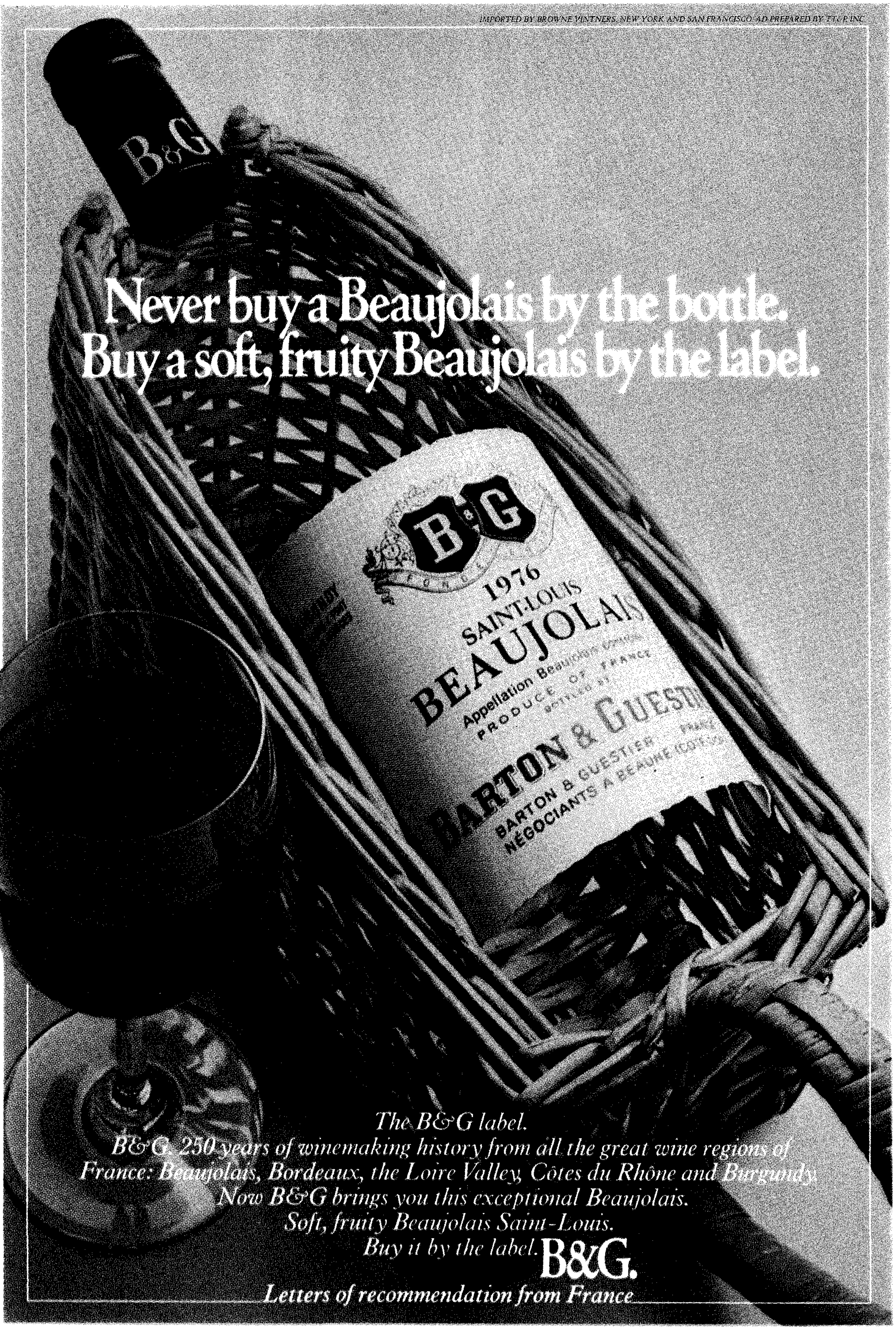
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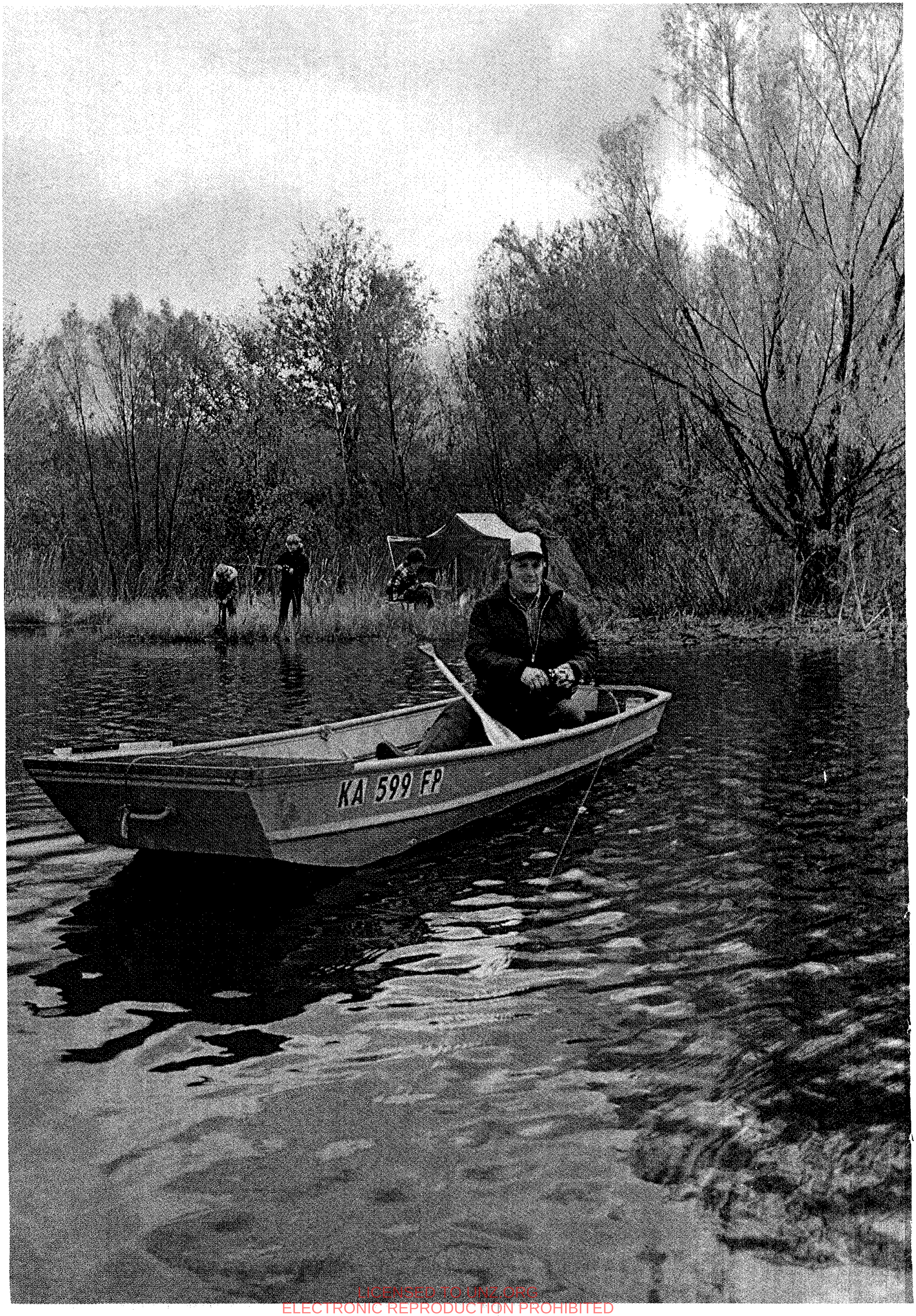
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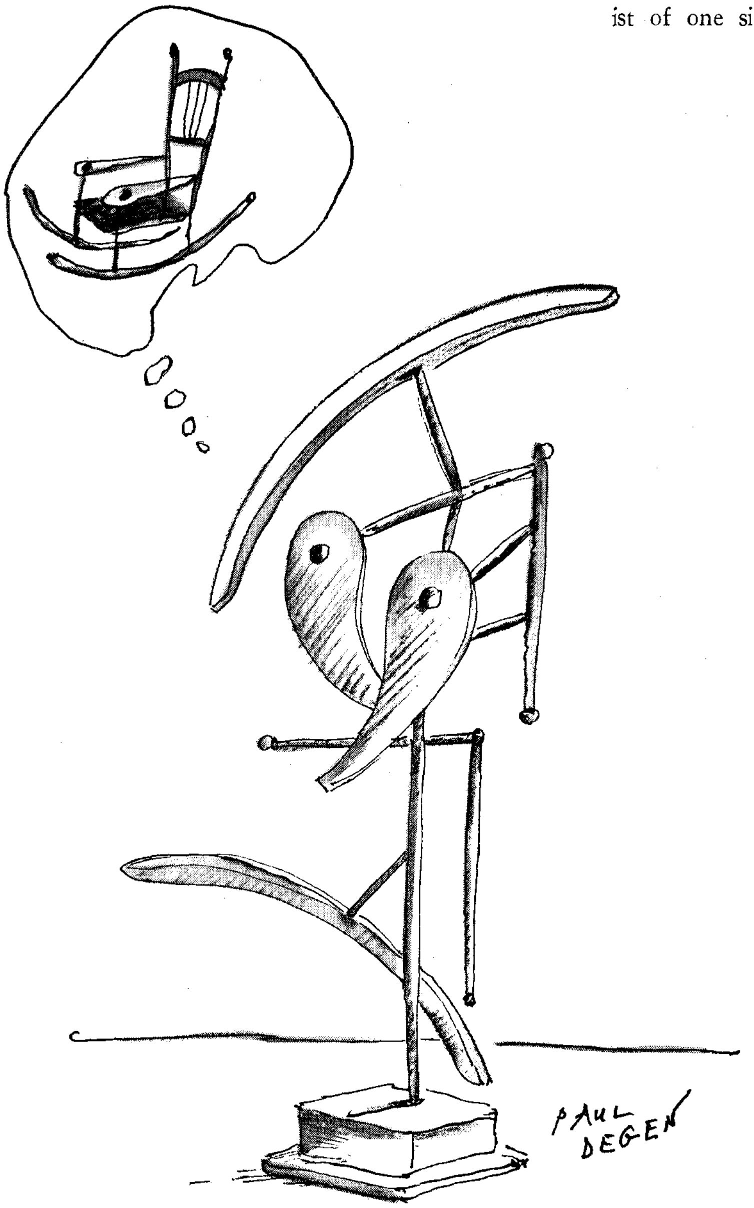
REFLECTIONS

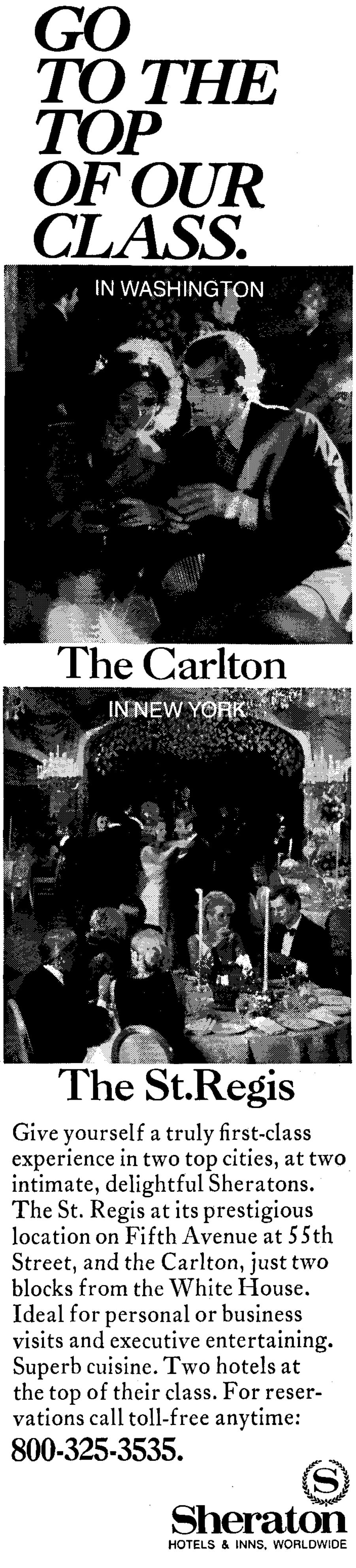
REMEMBRANCE OF MODERATES PAST

“I KEEP hearing about white people who say they’ve been working behind the scenes,” a black lawyer in New Orleans told me during the desegregation of the public schools there, in 1960—a time when the business and professional leadership of New Orleans stood silent while the city seemed to be taken over by a bunch of women in hair curlers screaming obscenities at six-year-olds. “Yes, sir,” he said. “It must be getting mighty crowded back there, behind the scenes.” I was a traveller in the South for the next year, travelling out of Atlanta to call in at school integrations and sit-ins and boycotts and Freedom Rides, and whenever somebody mentioned working behind the scenes, a picture planted by that black lawyer came into my mind: Onstage, little of interest is going on—just the usual succession of Southern pols, often in chorus, doing their “never-never” number and dancing off into the wings to great applause from the cheap seats. Every so often, that routine is broken by the appearance onstage of a solitary figure who presents a declamation about obeying the law of the land and is, predictably, pelted with rotten tomatoes, or worse. Behind the scenes, hordes of community leaders—prominent businessmen and pillars of the local bar and charity-drive chairmen and country-club presidents—are silently moving scenery around and around and around.

After many years, the picture was conjured up for me once again by the testimony of Griffin Bell, the new Attorney General, at his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Bell, he and his supporters emphasized, was one of the people working behind the scenes in those days when Georgia was finally going to have to decide how to respond to a court ordering a black child into a white school. Hearing those days recalled, I could again remember the politicians shouting “Never!”—or, in the rhythmic variation of Ernest Vandiver, then governor of Georgia, “Not one, no, not one”—and I could remember that occasional speech about obeying the law made by a housewife or a newspaper editor, or even, on exceptionally rare occasions, a lawyer. Those were, as Bell testified again and again, tumultuous times. Looking back, he told the senators, he was proud to have been there and to have been “in the middle of it.” Some of the people who testified in opposition to Bell’s confirmation seemed astounded that someone who had worked behind the scenes instead of going onstage—going onstage with the knowledge that it might result in a brick through the window or calls in the night threatening the children—could think of himself as having been in the middle of it. But, thanks to what that black lawyer in New Orleans told me, I think I could appreciate what Bell meant. I know it was mighty crowded back there.



ONE of the senators apologized for bringing up the matter of political categorizing by saying that he, naturally, hated labels. Politicians, particularly politicians who can be labelled liberals during an election campaign, are always saying they hate labels. I love labels myself. Bell doesn’t seem to mind them, either. He is an out-and-out moderate, and not afraid to tell you so to your face. In those tumultuous days, we travellers who found ourselves with some slack time at a scene of tumult sometimes entertained ourselves by trying to figure out what a moderate was. First, we had to eliminate what the newspapers of the day, including many Northern newspapers of the day, often referred to as “extremists of both sides.” An extremist of one side was a Negro (as we said then) who believed the 1954 Supreme Court school-desegregation decision meant that he could actually send his children to a school with whites. (He did not think that up all by himself, of course. The N.A.A.C.P. thought it up for him—the N.A.A.C.P. being, as Senator Herman Talmadge often reminded his constituents, the prime mover in a conspiracy whose true aim was to turn America into a race of mongrels.) The extremists of the other side were the people who threw rocks at the extremists of the first side. One of our definitions of a moderate, therefore, was someone who had never been caught throwing a rock at a Negro. Harold Fleming, who was then director of the Southern Regional Council, a small Atlanta hotbed of what he now calls “premature integrationists,” says a moderate was “a white man without sidearms.” The precision of our definitions was limited, of course, by the fact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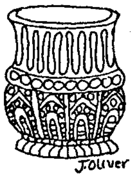
that most moderates could not be closely observed in action, being behind the scenes.

Civil-rights activists in the North tended to label white people in positions of power in the South not as "moderates" or "segregationists" but as "smart segs" or "dumb segs." By the late fifties, for instance, smart segs, realizing that the courts had gradually rendered massive resistance useless as a strategy for avoiding desegregation, concentrated instead on delaying tactics in the courts and the sort of anti-integration laws that usually avoided the word "Negro" or "race." In the early sixties, Laurie Pritchett, the police chief who easily smothered Martin Luther King's desegregation campaign in Albany, Georgia, by being very polite about putting everyone involved in jail, was considered a smart seg compared to Eugene Bull Connor, the Public Safety Commissioner of Birmingham, who reacted to a similar King campaign by turning police dogs on children and thus managed to inspire the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1961, a smart seg was someone who counselled that the best way to keep his city's bus station segregated was to permit the Freedom Riders to integrate to their hearts' content until, their rest stop being over, the bus carried them off to the next town, and the station returned to normal. The Freedom Riders, having travelled all the way from Virginia through the Carolinas and Georgia more or less in peace, were not attacked until they reached Alabama, which, it was generally agreed, was the world headquarters for dumb segs.



Some of the people who testified against Griffin Bell's confirmation were claiming, basically, that he was not a moderate but just a smart seg. As a counsel for Governor Vandiver in the late fifties, after all, he had helped draw up what were universally referred to at the time as "anti-integration laws," which would constitute Georgia's last-ditch defense against school desegregation—laws that established age limits for university applicants (black applicants often being over the customary age for college students, at least by the time the state's lawyers had stalled them in court for a few years) and provided for private-school tax credits and gave the governor power to close any school in order to preserve "good order." Bell testified that the laws were more moderate than the old massive-resistance laws, since they permitted the governor to close only one school instead of the entire system—the school to be closed, of course, being the one that had been ordered integrated.

Bell's real reputation for moderation, though, rested on what he had done behind the scenes. He had, it was testified, organized the Sibley Commission, whose hearings around the state began educating politicians to the reality that many white people in Georgia preferred integrated schools to no schools at all. He had kept in secret contact with Warren Cochrane, then a leader of the Atlanta black community—to whom he freely gave advice about not pressing desegregation suits until a more moderate climate of opinion could be arranged. When the desegregation order finally did come—unexpectedly at the University of Georgia, which no governor would have dared close, instead of at the Atlanta public schools—Bell was among those counselling Vandiver to abandon the anti-integration laws and capitulate with a series of laws which Vandiver called, with the felicity of phrase common to the times, "the child-protection freedom-of-association defense package."

It could be argued, of course, that Bell was merely stalling Cochrane in those meetings. It could be pointed out that the anti-integration laws that he, as a moderate, suggested abandoning were those that he himself had helped devise. Still, I think that most of us who travelled the South in those days would have agreed that Bell was, as he claimed to have been, a moderate within the context of the times. A moderate, according to one of our definitions, was someone who valued something more than segregation, and the people Bell was identified with in Georgia did value something more than segregation—business.

IT was customary in the South for outside observers to interpret events in terms of ideology (usually racial ideology) and for local observers to interpret the same events in terms of money (usually graft). When Governor Orval Faubus, of Arkansas, was the symbol of Southern resistance to desegregation, a huge bond issue that his administration had put together was considered by many to be a key to whether Faubus would attempt a Senate race against William Fulbright. Outside observers tended to think that passage of the bond-issue referendum would provide the confirmation of Faubus race politics which the Governor needed to challenge Fulbright, who, despite his signing of the Southern

Manifesto against the Supreme Court decision, was always suspected of being too worldly to be an authentic bigot. Local reporters assumed that if the bond issue passed Fulbright was safe, since it would generate so much money that Faubus would not be able to afford to leave the governor's office. When Faubus finally did leave office, some years later, reporters asked him how he managed to build a two-hundred-thousand-dollar house after so many years of earning an annual salary of only ten thousand dollars, and he said he owed it all to thrift.

As the time for a start on school desegregation in Georgia approached, in the late fifties, moderation became a position favored by businessmen—although, being unaccustomed to public speaking on matters more controversial than the United Fund, they tended to promote the position from well behind the scenes. The propaganda for peaceful compliance presented to leaders in Atlanta by such organizations as the Southern Regional Council did not emphasize racial justice, or even lawful obedience; it emphasized "the spectre of Little Rock," the fearful blow that defiance and chaos had dealt Arkansas's industrial development. When it seemed that the first desegregation would come in the Atlanta public schools, businessmen feared that the state legislature, then controlled by rural types who could campaign almost as well on hating Atlanta as on loving segregation, would find great entertainment in the closing of the schools and the filling of the streets with troops. The definition of a moderate which became most important was the one that described a moderate as someone who had something to lose.

The people in Georgia who had the most to lose from economic disaster controlled institutions like Coca-Cola and the Trust Company of Georgia. Their law firm was King & Spalding, one of whose partners was Griffin Bell. There are firms like King & Spalding in every state, of course—firms that provide the contact between government and the large corporate interests that have certain needs government must fill. King & Spalding represents not just many of the largest corporations in Georgia but many of the municipalities that want to float bond issues. The firm's primary mission from the start may have been to keep the world safe for Coca-Cola, but methods have changed over the years. It used to be said of one of King & Spalding's founders—and not said in an unkindly way—"The history of Georgia politics

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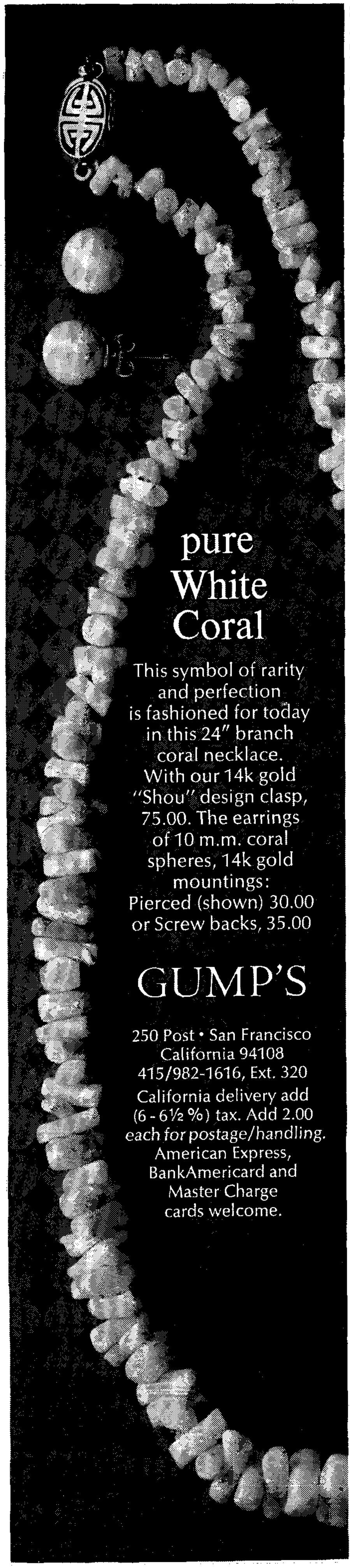

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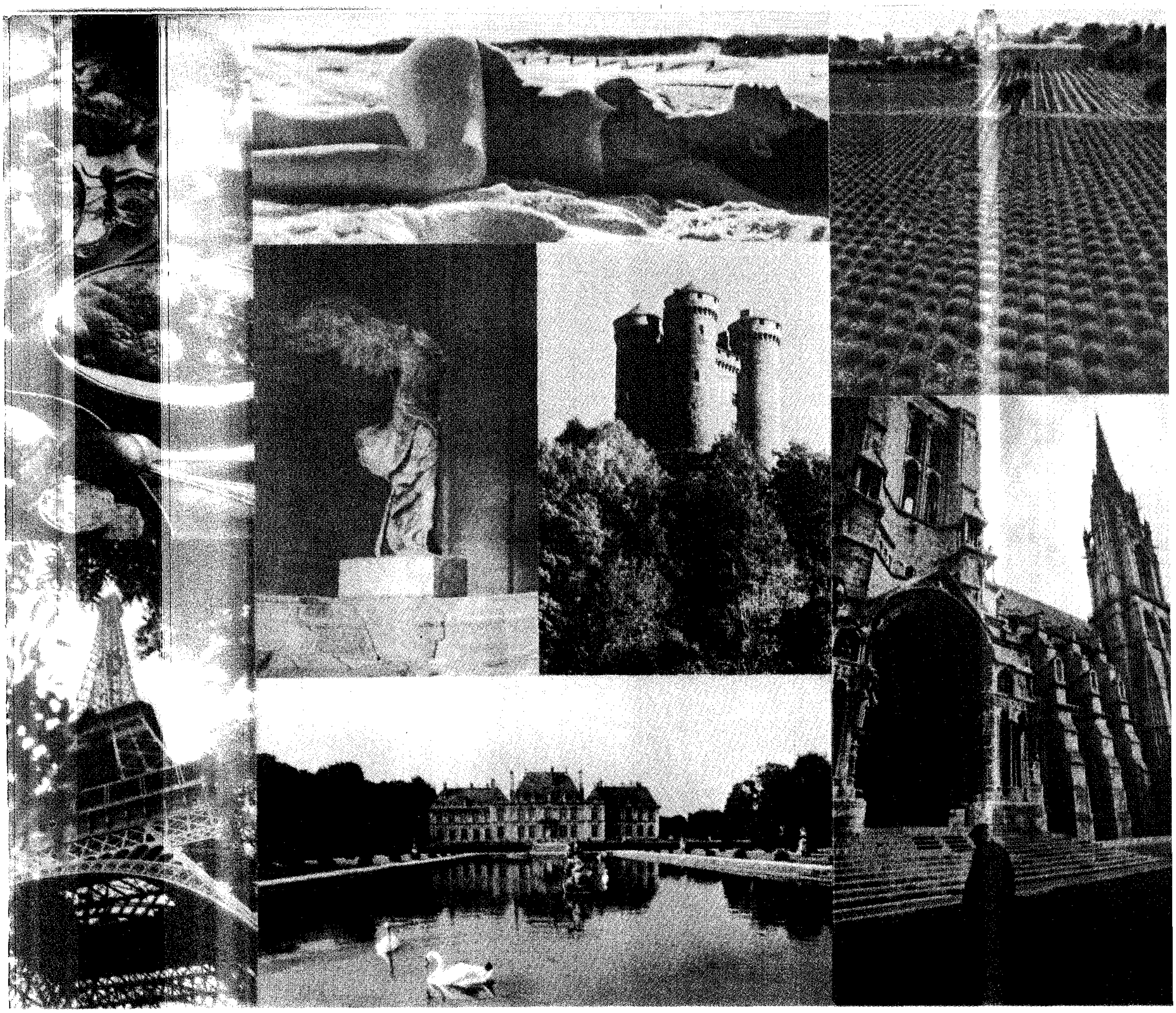
The sort of people King & Spalding represented were not averse to having desegregation stalled as long as possible—through devices like the package of laws that Bell and his colleagues concocted for Vandiver. (In an early example of public-interest law, Bell's services were donated by the firm to the governor.) It could be argued, in fact, that if Bell and Warren Cochrane had been left to themselves—if the federal court had not finally decided that the time had come, if Cochrane had not been edged aside by some younger men—they would today be discussing when an opportune moment for a start on desegregation might arrive. But a little delay is quite different from economic chaos. The state's most powerful businessmen wanted as little integration as possible, but they also wanted as little trouble as possible accompanying the integration that had to come. It was assumed at the time that the Sibley Commission—organized by Bell, headed by a former senior partner of King & Spalding who was also chairman of the board of the Trust Company of Georgia—was, for all of the rhetoric in its report which may have seemed segregationist in the North, an attempt by the moneyed interests in Georgia to feel around for some accommodation. To those who tend to interpret the goings on in the South according to money rather than ideology, what ties together Bell's roles in the Atlanta school case—holding secret conversations with Warren Cochrane as an adviser to Vandiver in the late fifties, proposing an out-of-court settlement as a federal judge in the early seventies—is not moderation or smart-seg manipulation but simply the fact that both represented the wishes of the most powerful businessmen in the state.

I have always suspected interpretations of public events which imply an understanding of personal motives. In Bell's situation, for instance, who is to say what part friendship or ambition or political commitment or chance played in his connection with Vandiver and the Sibley Commission? The economic interpretation of Southern events has always been tempting, of course, especially in Atlanta, a city whose atmosphere has usually had more in common with Houston than with Savannah. (There is a theory in Atlanta that what caused Governor Carl Sanders' damaging hesitation in making the financial-disclosure statement demanded by the opponent who was calling him Cufflinks Carl in the 1970 gubernatorial campaign, Jimmy Carter, was not that such a statement would reveal to the public embarrassing proof of any impropriety but that it would reveal to Sanders' business friends embarrassing proof of only middling wealth.) I admit that when I saw those campaign commercials last fall of Jimmy Carter dressed in beautifully cut neo-populist bluejeans, walking through the fields toward his farmhouse, it often occurred to me that when he got there he would pick up the telephone and call Charles Kirbo, who happened to be all dressed up in a suit himself, sitting in his office at King & Spalding. I admit also that I found some significance in the fact that the proprietors of the Atlanta *Constitution*, having been forbearing for so many years while Ralph McGill and Eugene Patterson stood right out onstage to make unpopular arguments for racial justice, finally drew the line in a way that prompted Patterson's resignation when he defended a column criticizing the Georgia Power Company—or when, as the Georgia saying goes, "he quit preachin' and got to meddlin'."

THE name of Frank Johnson, a federal district judge in Montgomery, was often mentioned in the confirmation hearings as an example of what a federal judge in the South could be, as opposed to what Griffin Bell was. Julian Bond, who seems to have emerged as the only resident of Greater Atlanta, black or white, willing to say anything that might limit access to the executive branch, asked the senators, with a straight face, "Why not the best?" Johnson, like the other Southern judges most often mentioned as examples of the best, is a Republican—appointed by Dwight Eisenhower, who had the advantage of having no Southern senators of his own party to assist him. In the early sixties, in fact, it used to occur to me that a foreign traveller who knew nothing about the Republican Party except what he gathered from observing federal judges in the South could easily mistake it for the party of Lincoln.

I once saw Frank Johnson on the bench. The details of the legal matter that brought me to his courtroom, some government motion against the Klan during the Freedom Rides, long ago faded from my mind, but I can still picture Johnson himself—a stern-looking man pacing up and down on the dais, dressed in a dark suit but no robe, stopping now and then to point an accusing finger at a Klan witness or a



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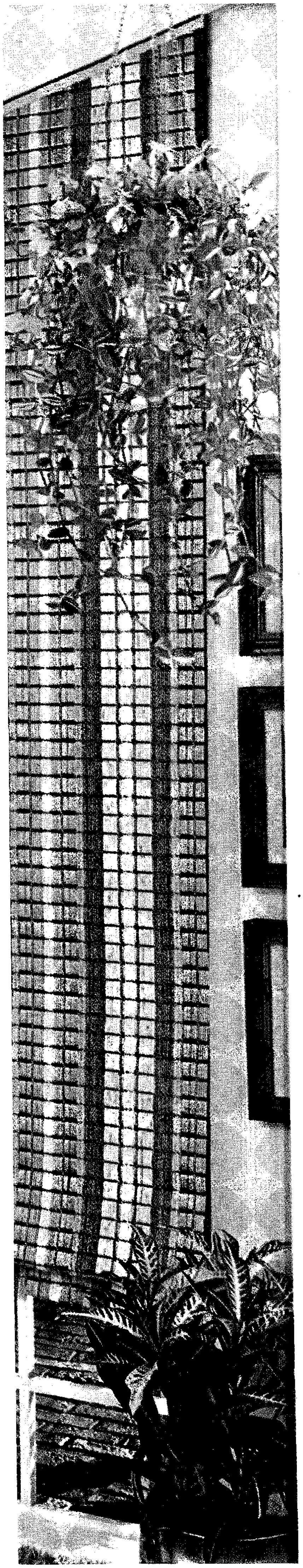

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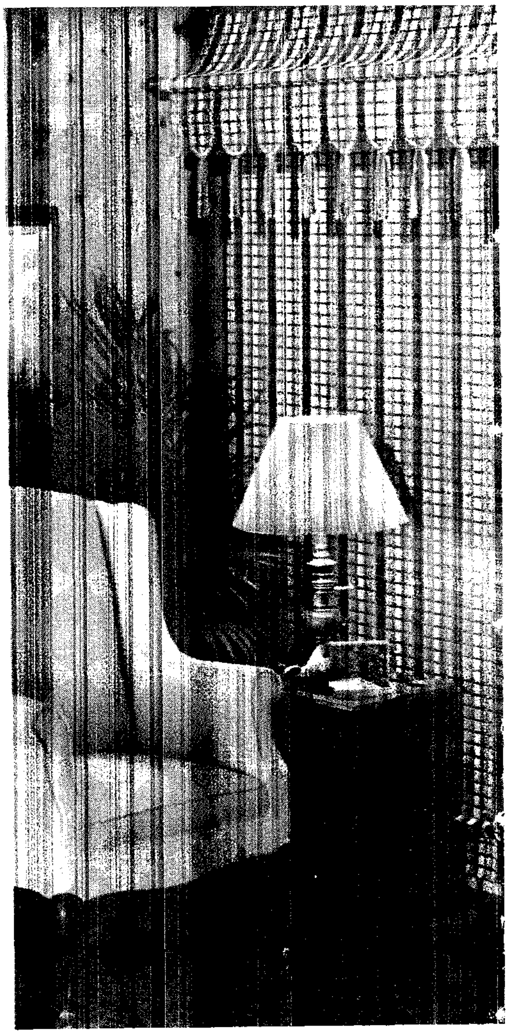

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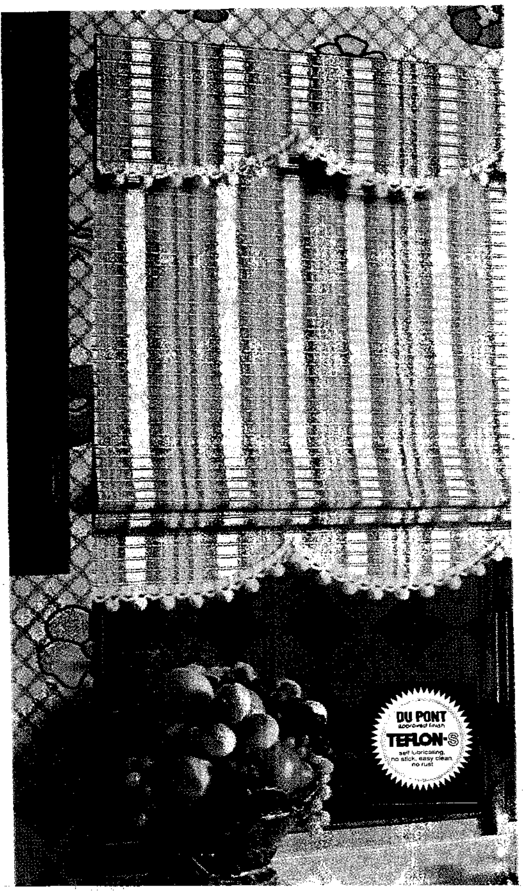

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government lawyer and demand the truth. He seemed to be a judge from the Old Testament; the first impression I got from watching him was that one form of justice might consist of being equally terrifying to both sides. During the Bell confirmation hearings, I could sometimes picture Frank Johnson striding up and down behind the members of the Judiciary Committee, frowning impatiently as one of the liberal Democratic senators who had been so vigilant in searching out a racist remark made by Harrold Carswell in 1948 sympathized at length with Bell about how difficult it must have been for a man in the middle of it down there in Georgia in 1960, then pausing in his stride to point a finger at the senator and say, "I don't want to hear any more about the 'temper of the times,' Counsellor." When I read, in the late sixties, that, the outrage of the local gentry over some of Johnson's decisions having turned the country club into a hostile camp, Johnson was forced to play golf at a nearby airbase, it occurred to me that an Old Testament judge must consider the location of his golf course a trifling matter indeed.

What brought Judge Johnson's golfing problems to mind, of course, was a discussion during the hearings of Bell's membership in the Piedmont Driving Club, an Atlanta country club that excludes Jews and, it almost goes without saying, blacks. One witness before the committee turned a good phrase by saying that Bell's initial notion of suspending his club membership while he was Attorney General revealed him to be a man willing to "put his conscience in blind trust," but most white Protestant Americans, including most federal judges and most people who have been Attorney General of the United States, consider clubs to be within that large category of activities which are not subject to inspection for racial or religious discrimination. Although Jimmy Carter's complaint that the matter had been raised only because of Bell's being a Southerner was, in its echo of similar complaints during the primaries, a reminder of how easily public debate can turn the drawl into a whine, I thought Bell's old friends and clients at the Piedmont Driving Club did have a point in saying that he was being asked to adhere to standards of purity which had not been applied to others. (In fact, those club members who cherish a notion of their background derived largely from the M-G-M version of "Gone with the Wind" must have been distressed that inspection of the Piedmont Driving Club by the

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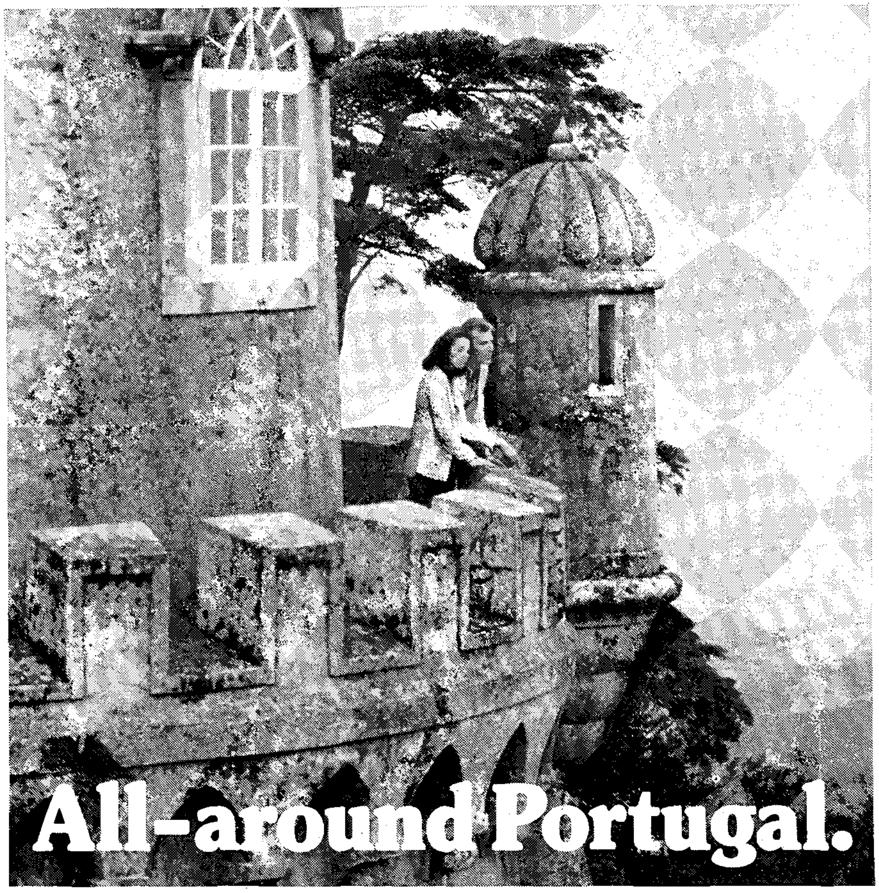

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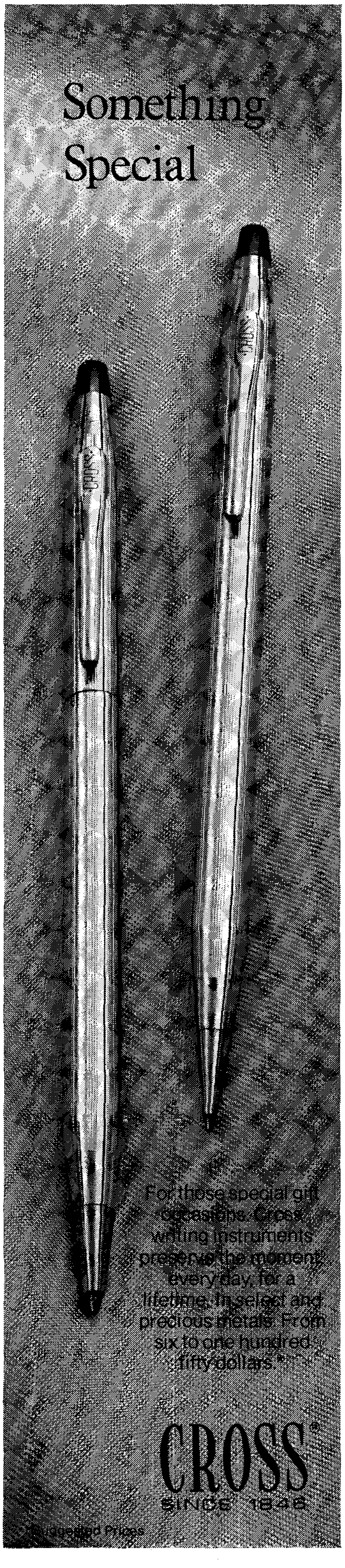

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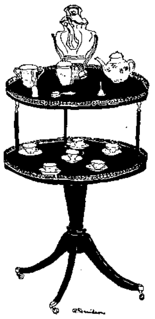
press revealed it to be embarrassingly similar to the equivalent club in any economically vital city of the American interior—its most famous member being a self-made migrant from a small town, its founding not having taken place until the city's German Jews had for twenty years provided a model of what an exclusive club should be like.) In light of Frank Johnson's experience, it seemed to me, the question to ask of someone about to become what was often called during the hearings the people's lawyer was not whether he belonged to a restricted country club but whether, as a lawyer or as a judge, he had ever done anything that might make him feel even remotely uncomfortable as he walked through the front door.

JUST before the confirmation hearings on Griffin Bell's nomination, I read a column by Phil Gailey in the Miami *Herald* that raised the question of how Jimmy Carter would have fared under similar senatorial examination. Carter was, after all, a member of the Sumter County Board of Education when, as Murray Kempton has pointed out, a liberal was someone who didn't object to putting a coat of paint on the colored school. In fact, Sumter County, now visited by tourists interested in observing their President's idyllic small-town roots, had a reputation among us travellers as the nastiest county in the state—partly because the presence of Koinonia Farm, an interracial Christian community, had constituted what its founder once called a "divine irritant." In Americus, the county seat, a federal court order was required in 1960 to admit *white* children from Koinonia into the white high school. (A few years later, another federal court order was required to free four civil-rights workers held in Americus under a state insurrection law that carried the death penalty.) There is no record of Jimmy Carter, a prominent businessman in the county, stepping forward (as some local ministers did) to remind his neighbors that firing shotguns at people's houses and burning down their barns constituted un-Christian behavior. As late as 1970, Carter ran a campaign against Carl Sanders which included a promise to invite George Wallace to speak in Georgia, an appearance just before the election at one of the new private schools known as Seg Academies, and a charge that Sanders had revealed himself to be a captive of "the ultra-liberal wing of the Democratic Party" by sharing a platform and some platform courtesies with Hubert Humphrey. Would any of this be considered disabling to a man who wanted to be, say, Attorney General of the United States? Does Jimmy Carter have in his past what the senators on the Judiciary Committee like to refer to as a smoking gun? Clarence Mitchell, the Washington representative of the N.A.A.C.P., was widely criticized for characterizing Bell as what amounted to a Good German, but a confirmation hearing on a white Southerner of Bell's age does carry some atmosphere of a de-Nazification court.

It is true, as Bell's defenders said during the hearings, that white people in the South in the fifties and sixties were tested in a way that white people in the rest of the country were not. The time had not yet come when white parents in the North would have to decide if principle required them to expose their child to the sort of mob that encircled the desegregated schools of New Orleans. It is also true that there were white people in the South, some of them believers in segregation, who drew the line at what they would do in its name. Pretending that "there was no choice in Georgia in 1960 but silence, segregation, and subversion of the law," according to Julian Bond, "would dishonor the memory of those who bravely fought for what was right." There were lawyers in the South whose view of the law would not have permitted them to defend school segregation "by all legal means" in court once Supreme Court decisions had reduced the means available to little more than evasion and perjury. (The state's defense in the University of Georgia case consisted partly of hauling to the witness stand university administrators who swore they knew of no policy to exclude Negroes.) When the Sibley Commission held its first public hearing, in Americus, several dozen politicians and educators and civic leaders appeared before it to say that an end to public education would be preferable to any integration at all, but a few people—a housewife, a priest, a labor leader—stood up publicly to say the opposite. There were white people in the South in those days like William Tate, the dean of men at the University of Georgia, who did not seem to consider the possibility of looking the other way if a student placed under his charge, black or white, was being harassed. As



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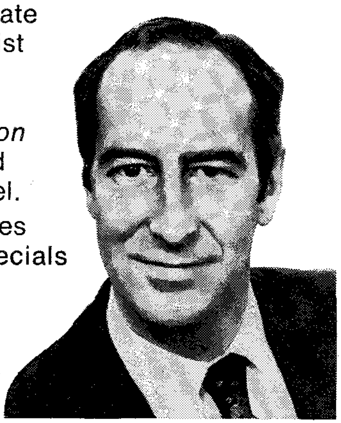

Thomas Hoving

PREVIN AND THE PITTSBURGH

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I look back at those people who did stand up onstage, though, it occurs to me that a lot of them did not survive the period well. Some of them were driven from their home towns. Some of them found their personal lives unravelling under the tension. Whatever their views on segregation, they were, for all practical purposes, "premature integrationists." Jimmy Carter had an opportunity to testify before the Sibley Commission at Americus that, as a member of the Sumter County Board of Education, he was unwilling to preside over the abandonment of public education in the name of segregation, but if he had he would probably not now be the President of the United States.

Some of the Southern politicians who were prominently featured onstage in those days shouting "Never!" survived remarkably well, considering the fact that the rather sudden appearance of a huge black vote required some of them to make a well-timed leap to the other side as the drawbridge was going up. Herman Talmadge escorted to confirmation hearings not merely Griffin Bell but Andrew Young. During his remarks about how fortunate Georgia was in having had people like Griffin Bell "to pour oil on troubled waters . . . during a tumultuous and even inflammatory era," it was difficult to keep in mind that Senator Talmadge spoke as someone who had himself caused a good deal of the tumult. It was hard for someone hearing him refer to Ralph McGill as "the highly respected, internationally renowned human-rights advocate" to realize that he was talking about old Rastus McGill the Race-Mixer—the man who could make any Georgia governor's day if caught drinking tea with black people by a photographer kept on the state payroll for just such game. Those events are best forgotten now, of course, by black Georgians who have an interest in sharing power, as well as by whites. Birch Bayh, who in defending Bell's nomination on the Senate floor argued that no man with racism in his past would have received an honorary degree from Morris Brown College, a predominantly black school in Atlanta, had apparently been absent from the hearing room when Julian Bond remarked that another recent recipient of a Morris Brown honorary degree was Senator Herman Talmadge.

Carter, perhaps alone among Southern politicians of his age, made the transition adroitly enough to run for national as well as statewide office—stating at his gubernatorial inaugura-

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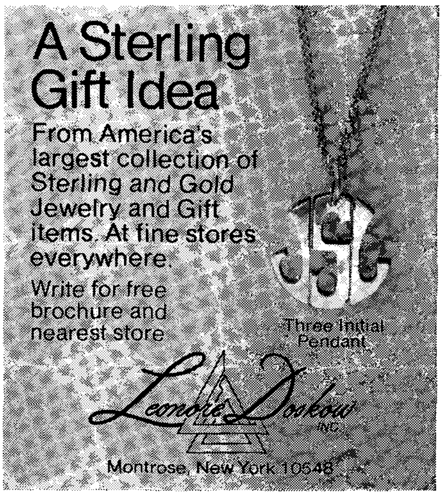

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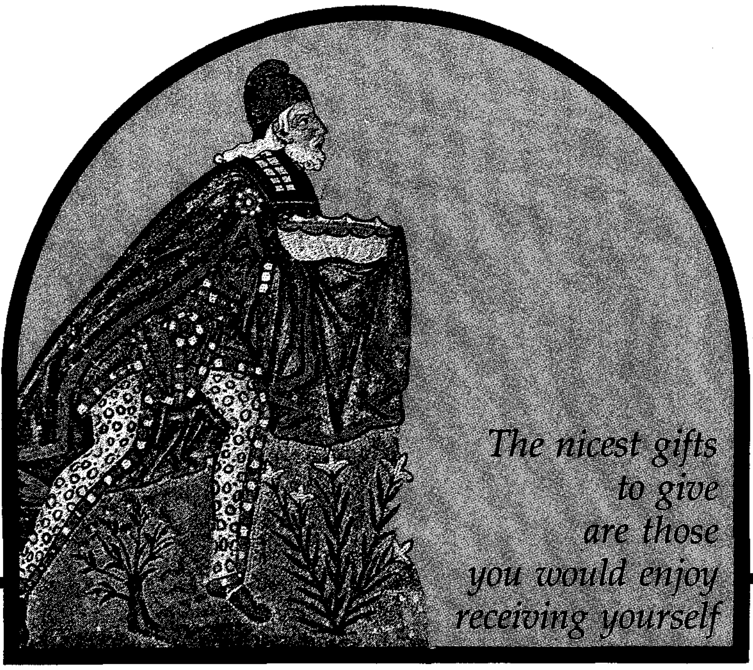
tion, four months after he stood inside the Seg Academy door, that the time for racial discrimination was over, hanging a portrait of Martin Luther King in the state capitol, and conducting himself ever since in a way that has caused many blacks and white liberals to give him the benefit of believing that his actions in the Sanders campaign constituted merely a deceitful attempt to get elected. If the hearings on Bell are an indication, whether or not Carter would have any trouble being confirmed by a Senate committee would depend on the party affiliation of the President who appointed him. More smoke is required of a Democratic gun than of a Republican gun. When one anti-Bell witness testified, apparently mistakenly, that Bell had once promised the Georgia legislature to delay desegregation by every legal means, Senator Bayh said that such a statement would constitute a smoking gun. But no unearthed statement was necessary to prove that Bell had attempted to delay desegregation by every legal means. He testified to that himself; it was, after all, what he regarded as the moderate position. Under questioning from Senator Charles Mathias, he acknowledged that such delay was carried out with the knowledge that the Supreme Court had said, in Cooper v. Aaron, "that delay in any guise in order to deny the constitutional rights of Negro children could not be countenanced, and that only a prompt start, diligently and earnestly pursued, to eliminate racial segregation from the public schools could constitute good faith compliance." The liberal Democrats on the committee talked about redemption and how a man could change over the years; Bell testified that his maneuvering for Vandiver constituted one of the best pieces of legal work of his career.

Discussion of Bell's ruling as a federal judge that the Georgia House of Representatives had a right to refuse to seat Julian Bond because of his public opposition to a war it was national policy to pursue—a decision later reversed nine to zero by the Supreme Court—was a reminder, of course, that the smoking guns in the backgrounds of some other Carter Cabinet appointees were literally smoking guns. Even the days of turmoil in the South did not produce as many behind-the-scenes moderates as the Vietnam war. Most of them have also survived well. Bond stated that it might be nice to have an Attorney General "who was not wrong about both of the great moral issues of the last two decades," but the sort of peo-



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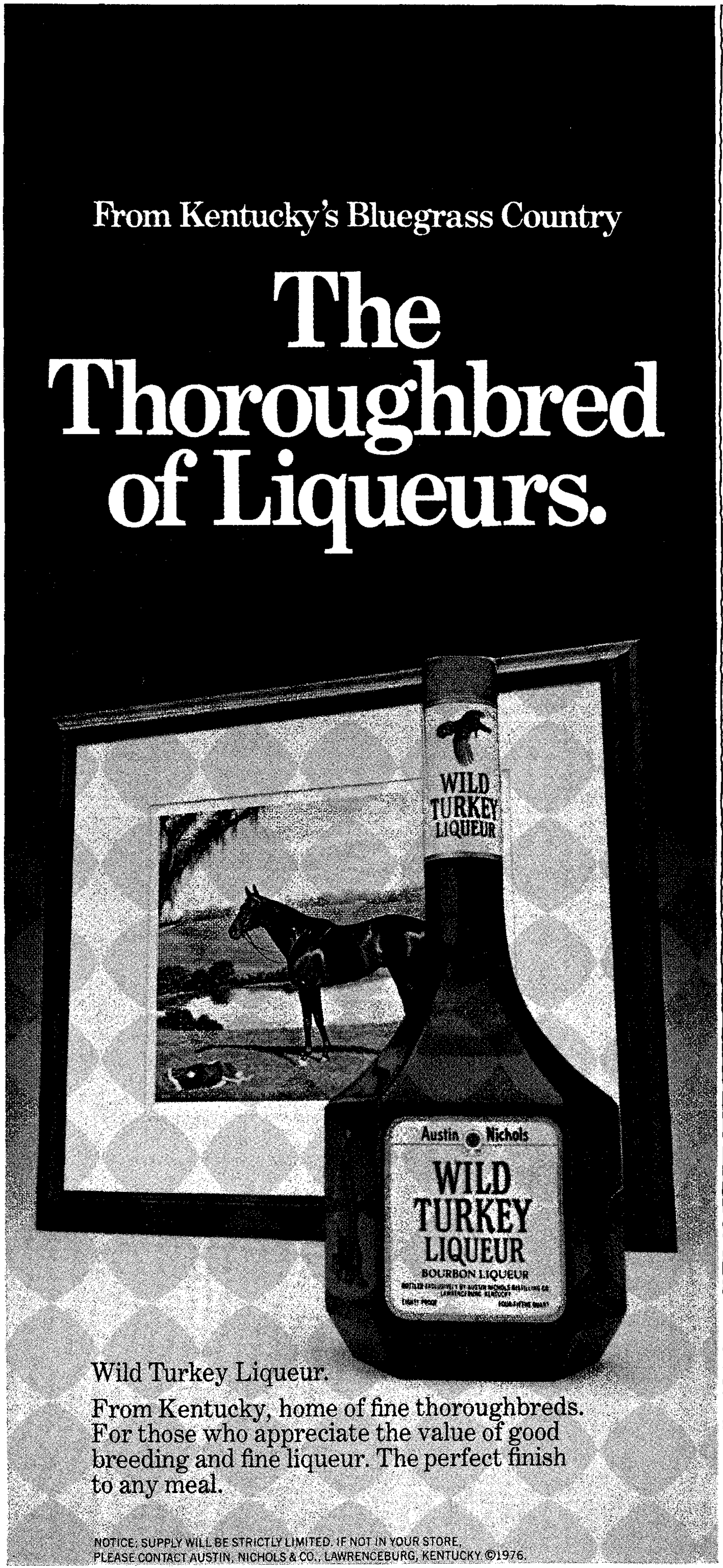

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ple who are nominated for Cabinet positions are normally people who have worked within the policy of the established government—neither premature integrationists nor premature doves.

IF Griffin Bell was guilty of racism during those tumultuous days, his supporters asked, how can it be explained that John F. Kennedy appointed him to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1961? The cruellest explanation, of course, would be an examination of the other federal judges the Kennedy Administration appointed in the South—Kennedy having been the President who entrusted the legal rights of the black people of Mississippi to Senator James Eastland's college roommate, a man who has referred to blacks as "niggers" and "chimpanzees" from the bench. Bell was certainly a moderate compared to the Kennedy judge who said the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision was "one of the truly regrettable decisions of all time"—although no one seemed to care much one way or another in 1961. The chairman of the American Bar Association committee charged with checking Bell's credentials in 1961 happened to be Leon Jaworski, who, according to his testimony in the recent hearings, seems to have cleared Bell from any suspicion of racism largely by consulting his predecessor as committee chairman, Charles Bloch, of Macon, Georgia—an attorney best known in Georgia, it was later pointed out, as an architect of the state's massive-resistance laws.

Until Bull Connor committed the final dumb-seg folly in Birmingham in 1963, the Kennedy Administration's policy on civil rights could best be described as moderate. At a time when virtually no blacks were allowed to vote in Alabama or Mississippi, the Administration had made it clear that no attempt to pass voting-rights legislation would be made. A suggestion by the Commission on Civil Rights in 1963 that federal funds be withheld from the state of Mississippi for "direct defiance of the Constitution" was considered the fantasy of impractical zealots, and the Administration treated it as hardly worthy of a reply. The Kennedy Administration, like past Administrations, dealt with civil rights as one item of business, not a national commitment that could be allowed to interfere with other items of business. In the early sixties, to the understandable irritation of white Southerners, racial bigotry was considered a regional rather than a national characteristic—but only a mildly distressing rather than a disabling characteristic, like boasting among Texans. The notion that racism was not acceptable even in certain regions or certain clubs or certain circumstances—the notion that it could not be treated with moderation—was a notion still largely confined to black people. A lot of laws have been passed and a lot of marches have been marched and a lot of changes have been made since the early sixties, but as I listened to the witnesses who testified at the Bell hearings I realized that it still may be a notion largely confined to black people. "Every time you say that this is something that happened a long time ago, it convinces me that your assessment of this set of circumstances is different from mine," Clarence Mitchell, of the N.A.A.C.P., told Senator Bayh during a discussion of Bell's legal work for Ernest Vandiver. "I have been the victim. I know the victims." Identifying with the victims is required in order to testify, as Mitchell testified, that Bell's maneuvering did not constitute some understandable tactical stalling of school desegregation but "the stealing of the precious constitutional rights of thousands of black children." When it comes to race, I think, most white Americans are still, like Griffin Bell, moderates.

—CALVIN TRILLIN

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THE CLOUDED CRYSTAL BALL

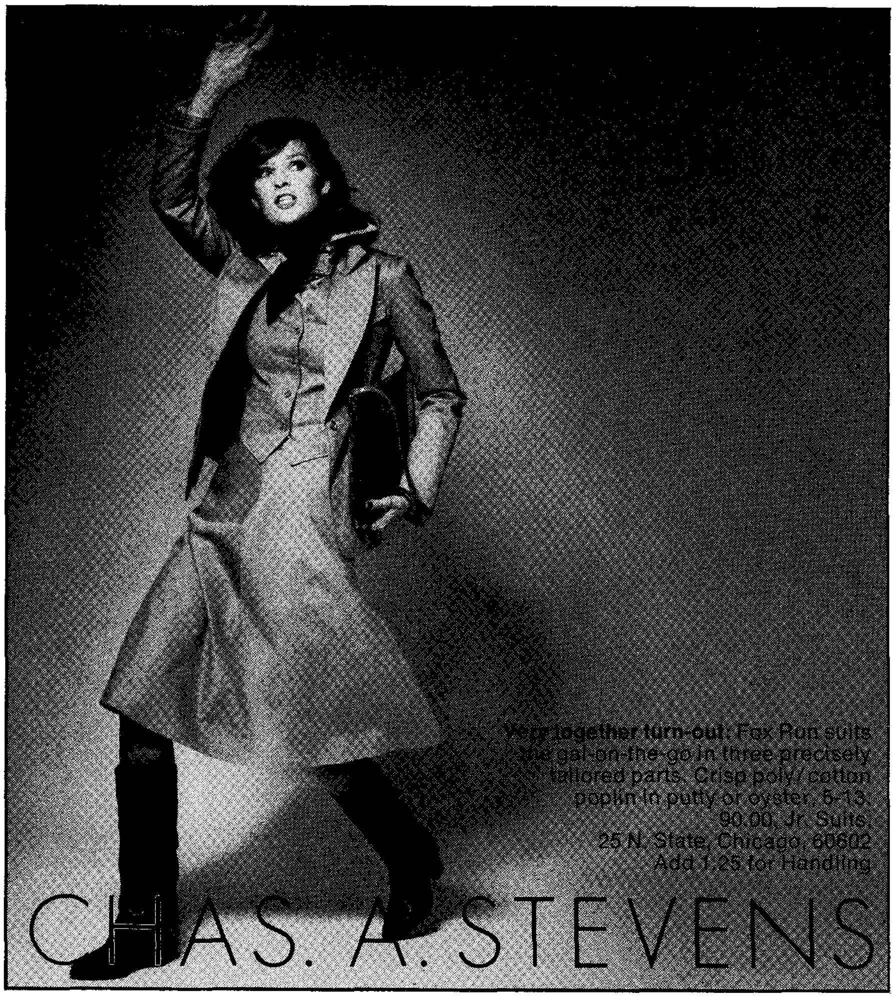
[*From "Music, Acoustics & Architecture" (1962), by Leo L. Beranek*]

At 10:00 o'clock Monday morning, May 28, 1962, Seiji Ozawa, a gifted young assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra for the 1961-1962 season, raised his baton before the 106 men and women of the Orchestra and the brass and woodwinds proclaimed the eloquent opening chords of the *Third Symphony* of Brahms. Philharmonic Hall—whose stage until moments before had been a swarm of workmen installing temporary doors, wall paneling, stage platforms, chairs, and music racks—suddenly resounded to its first symphonic music! As the strings entered and the magnificent leaping theme developed in tutti, it was apparent that the hall would fulfill its designers' great expectations and that the new home for the Philharmonic would be an acoustical success.

•

Anyone in search of easy reading would be wise to stop their ears to this praise. Professor Sennett's prose can be maddeningly turgid and oblique, not to mention repetitive, disorganized, and occasionally downright ungrammatical. —*Christopher Lehmann-Haupt in the Times.*

Begin again, Mr. Lehmann-Haupt. Slowly and cautiously.



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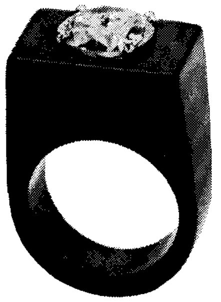

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MADRID

THE half million dead of the Spanish Civil War are part of the population here. It is thirty-eight years since the war ended, and by now the majority of Madrileños are children of the numbing peace that Francisco Franco orchestrated for the country at a time when the energies of better men had been exhausted. But the dead are part of a collective memory. They are a sickening spectral presence in this city, where the future of Spain is being negotiated. They haunt an uneasy moment of transition—*transición*, the government calls it, and even the left takes up the rhetoric, grateful for such a calming, ordinary word to cover the tensions of preparing for the country's first free elections since the nineteen-thirties: elections to be held at the discretion of rulers whose power is still for all practical purposes absolute. And they transform each act of terrorism that the city suffers (five Communists killed this winter; three policemen killed; one student killed; a powerful general and an even more powerful oligarch kidnapped) into an event of paralyzing implications. They evoke images of mass murder and betrayal in people who have been promised democracy but have no confidence in the ability of a democratic society to resolve its crises, or even survive them. In the end, they stifle the politics here, making it fragile, cautious, and conciliatory. They leave a King and his conservative Prime Minister looking to the world like ardent reformers, because Juan Carlos de Borbón and Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez González are the only people in Spain with an accurate idea of what their options are.

MADRID is still very much Francisco Franco's city, despite the fact that El Caudillo has been officially forgotten and people who frequent Fascist circles say that no one important but Antonio María de Oriol y Urquijo—the kidnapped and by now rescued oligarch—invites his widow to dinner parties anymore. Franco stamped Madrid with the sour puritanism of what he called his Christian mission, and Madrid was not a lighthearted city to begin with. It was always a city of preposterous formality, much taken with the spectacle of its own monuments and boulevards, its marble palaces and enormous public plazas. It had none of the edgy dignity of Barcelona or the grace of the old southern cities like Granada and Seville. It was the city of Spain's imperial bureaucracy, built to embody some supreme notion of the state at a time when even the king was still referred to as king of "the Spains"—the kind of city that would make a perfect Fascist capital.

Even today, there is no real bohemia in Madrid. The Plaza Mayor, with its old paving stones and ironwork balconies, its arcade of dusty little shops and its *tapa* bars, has the sort of worn, compact charm that tourists associate with a bohemia, but the business of tourists is reading life into the picturesque. Eccentricity does not interest the people here at all. There is no excitement in the arts now, and there are no high jinks or high spirits at the university to mark the death of a philistine despot whose troops went into battle crying "*Abajo la inteligencia!*" Most Madrileños have gone right on cultivating the ostentatious propriety that passed for culture during the Franco years. A *paseo* is still less of an evening stroll than a kind of testimony. Men on the street look almost furious with self-importance. Their wives are girdled and lacquered into place beside them; they have a keen eye for the quality of fur coats and imported tartans, but they do not seem overconcerned that a woman is not allowed to buy a share of stock or take a trip to Paris without written permission from her husband. In fact, there is more concern among the bourgeoisie about pornography on the newsstands than about, say, police brutality in Bilbao or poverty in Andalusia. Madrid has been stormed by the flesh impresarios since Franco died. Their magazines and movies started appearing as soon as the Generalísimo's photograph came down, but the censors make a point of leaving them alone. People on the left claim that the government is offering up sex as a placebo, and there is at least some truth in what they say, because the censors are still around, and they are still busy with politics when the mood suits them. The magazine *Cuadernos* lost the better part of three pages of opposition statements on the government's reform referendum this past December. Publishers still have to drop all

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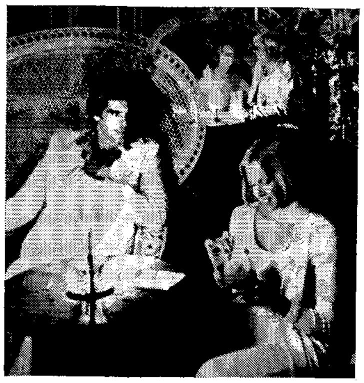

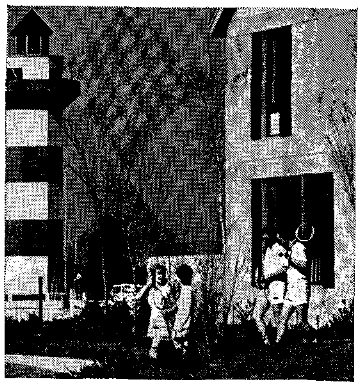

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magazines and newspapers off at the Ministry of Information on their way to the newsstands and distributors, and wait to see if an issue is recalled—and not many Madrileños seem overconcerned about that, either.

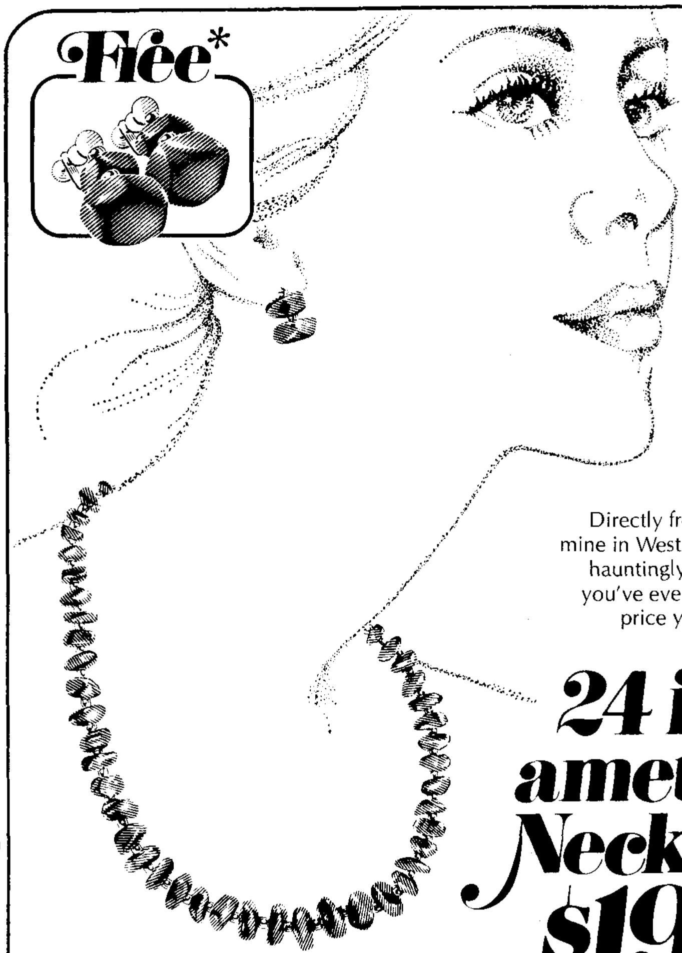
FRANCO's bourgeoisie—the millions of Spaniards nurtured in the ample bureaucratic bosom of the Fascist state—were in the end more embarrassed than alarmed by their Caudillo. They waited for him to die in bed, and now they distinguish themselves from him with a disarming variety of labels—reconverted Franquista, Franquista reformist, regime democrat—and claim, with some justice, that it was possible to survive, and even thrive, in Franco's Spain without actively supporting the old man's policies. But the fact is that few of them resisted those policies at all while Franco lived. Intellectuals resisted. Workers certainly resisted—and the price for Franco of Spain's amazing development over the past twenty years was the passionate opposition of a huge new industrial working class. But Spain's middle class had grown, too, as the country prospered, and it produced very few militant dissenters.

By the early seventies, when Franco's personal authority began to fail with his health, some respectable people grumbled their disapproval from within the safety of the Franquista establishment. Others went as far as to add their names to the protests that circulated when a radical professor lost a chair at the university or when a Communist worker was seized and tortured by the Guardia Civil or a plucky duchess went to jail or a couple of young Basque separatists were executed. But only the best of those respectable people were willing to risk the privilege they held at Franco's indulgence. They were the creatures of the regime under which they prospered. And because they still associate that prosperity, if not precisely with the regime, then with some vague ideal of law-and-order government—forgetting that in the halcyon sixties any European state with the amount of investment Spain attracted was bound to prosper—they are also apt to associate Spain's money troubles now, in the oil-crisis seventies, with the perfectly healthy confusions of a free society. At best, their new commitment to democracy is fashionable and fragile. The liberal and socialist politicians here know this, and it makes them much less interested in pushing their own advantage at the moment than in negotiating structures of the kind that will guarantee them an opposition voice in whatever government the country has.

THERE are three million people in this city, and it is getting hard to find a Republican among them. The Second Spanish Republic has been one of the abiding nostalgias of the Western left, but as a cause it is probably better suited to the veterans who sat down in New York a few weeks ago for their annual Abraham Lincoln Brigade dinner than to Spaniards, who are burdened with the realities of power here and have their own survival to consider. Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and all the reconverted and reformed Franquistas—everybody in Madrid is quick to say how highly he regards the King, except, of course, the liberal Carlists, who would prefer to see his quixotic father, the Count of Barcelona, come riding home from the beach at Estoril and claim the country for himself. The politicians campaigning for the parliamentary elections late this spring are all technically in opposition to the King's government, but most of them are counting on Prime Minister Suárez, who belongs to no one but the King, to be in office for the next few years. Spain in its transition is a house of cards, and the one thing that the politicians here can agree on is that Juan Carlos, with his curious hybrid legitimacy, is the person who holds the house up.

A year ago, the right considered Juan Carlos an agreeable fool, the left considered him a dangerous fool, and there were not many people beyond his family and his circle of Army friends who knew him well enough to predict his capacity for anything besides waterskiing and sailing. His private life was guarded, and his public life, as the heir-designate of a dictator whose particular snobbery it was to choose a prince instead of a general or a Movimiento politician to succeed him, had been ceremonial to the point that when he appeared at all he appeared ridiculous. His education was by definition limited, having been entrusted to a tutor from the Opus Dei—the Catholic lay order that had gradually replaced the wartime Falange as the most important force for political reaction in the country, controlling the financial and educational institutions, and counting among its solemn vows the "suppression of liberalism." He was considered *primitivo*—simple and ruthlessly self-absorbed—and therefore no real threat to the people who had groomed him. Now that he has taken up democracy, the people who call him primitive are straining to love him. Suárez' *chef de cabinet* talks about the democratic traditions of the Borbóns. Perfectly serious people speculate on whether he is more of a social democrat or a Christian Democrat. And though few of them seem really to believe a word of what they say, the fact that they say it at all seems to indicate that the King, at thirty-nine, is better at keeping a crown on his head—which is mainly what he wants to do—than anyone expected. He has certainly mastered the royal art of appearing gracious to the people he manipulates, but those people tend to forget that he has had a lot of practice. He was written into the country's future in 1969, when Franco was already failing, and from then until the Generalísimo's death, in 1975, he served an unnerving apprenticeship to Franco and the aging Falangists on his Council of the Realm—pushed forward into ceremonial command whenever Franco took sick, pushed back into his palace whenever Franco seemed to recover. He must have developed a fine instinct for his own advantage during that apprenticeship. The fact that he survived it at all as a favorite is proof of steely and ambitious character, and it seems odd in retrospect that the Spanish, right and left, expected him to be so weak.

JUAN BENET, the Spanish novelist, says one should think of politics here as a widow whose husband died forty years ago and left her, mourning, with no experience in bed. Politicians in Madrid are making a mystique of democracy. They talk a lot about rights and freedoms, but most of them seem to have very little aptitude or instinct for practical democratic politics. Madrid has more political parties now than people can even name. There are also literally hundreds of little parties in the provinces—each of them up for sale to whichever national party will take on its particular crusade in exchange for the local candidates it can supply. And one of the reasons so many politicians are eager to keep Adolfo Suárez as Prime Minister after the elections may simply be that in a country where anyone with a modicum of political ambition wants his own party it is unlikely that even a winning coalition will be able to agree on a substitute. Adolfo Suárez has been the King's great coup. He is the King's friend, the palace diplomat, the same sort of hybrid of the system that produced them both. He had the proper



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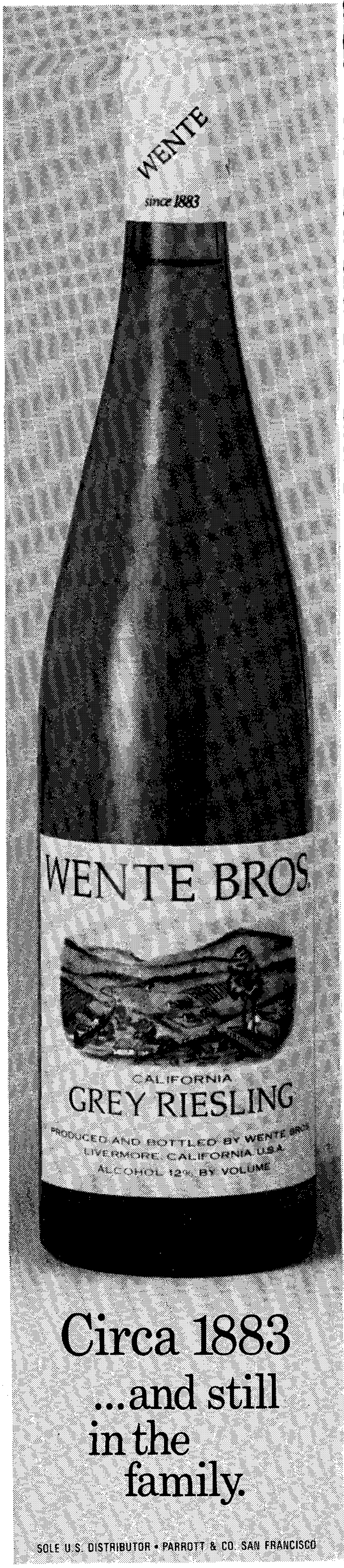

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Franquista credentials for the Council of the Realm, which has to pass on the nomination of a Prime Minister. He was a young man out of Franco's Movimiento, with ties to the Opus Dei and a decent reputation among the Council's few closet Christian Democrats. Then again, he had credibility with the opposition, because, in the curious sorting out of Franquistas from Franquistas that has been going on since the Generalísimo's death, he was somehow considered one of the uncompromised. He had never been a minister of the regime, unlike most of the important new "democrats" in what is now politely referred to as the center. People called him "that poor boy from Ávila," and said it was perfectly understandable that a provincial lawyer's son, with no fortune of his own, should have chosen the Fascist Movimiento as a route to some modest prominence. Besides, Suárez had no power base beyond the palace. He owed no debts to the oligarchs or the generals. He owed his job to Juan Carlos, and he had not declared himself with any faction or any party—which meant that nearly every party was prepared to trust him some.

By now, Suárez has made a religion of the transition. His friends say that he is determined to "save" Spain, and if there are traces of the Opus Dei in his dedication, his talent for politics is entirely his own. He manages to appease most conservatives here (who have confidence in him anyway, knowing that he is, after all, one of them) at the same time that he is preëmpting protest on the left with the ingenious timing of his political pardons and reforms. Politicians say that any party Suárez joined would get a majority in the elections—something that no single party will come near to getting without him—but so far, at least, his appeal arises precisely from the role he plays as a politician above politics. This was the role that he wanted to play and that the King wanted him to play, and it has left him options that none of the party politicians have. People know who his friends are, and which of the new groups have his approval. He could join one of them—and he may well soon if the old Franquistas begin to look too powerful. There is nothing in the political-reform law, though, that says a Prime Minister has to enter the elections to keep his job, or even take an appointed seat in the upper house of the Cortes.

The new Cortes will be a curious body—a constituent assembly that will also act as a legislative one, drafting laws at the discretion of the King until

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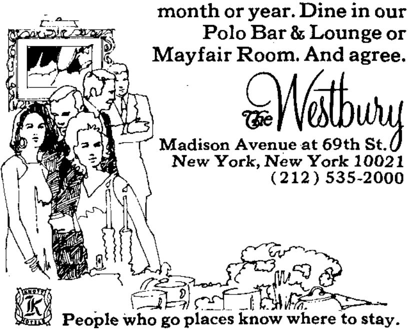

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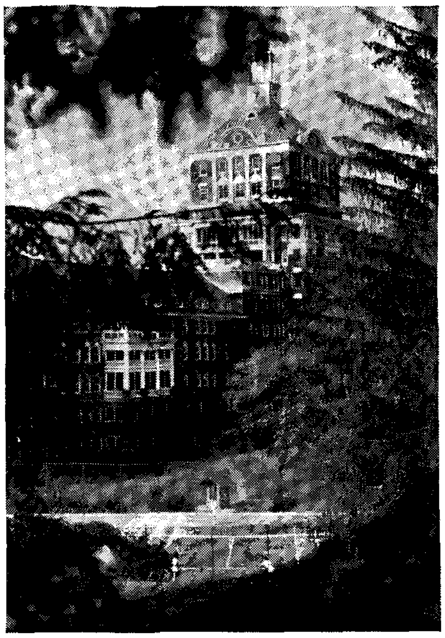
it writes the constitution that dissolves it. It will hardly be a revolutionary body, since most people expect that a strictly centrist coalition will run it. And in all likelihood it will be a stage for personalities instead of positions anyway, because in Spain "center" is really a code for a lot of new and old politicians negotiating their own shares of the spotlight. The center is already making its electoral alliances. One group calls itself the Democratic Center, and the other the Independent Socialist Federation, and while each of them is led by ex-Franquistas, together they accommodate all manner of Christian Democrats; Liberals (who are really conservatives with, for confusion's sake, a Basque leader); rightist "democrats," better known here as Franco apostates, from a group called the Popular Party; Social Democrats (which in Spain means liberal capitalists); a few small "democratic socialist" parties, which are known more for their anti-Communism than for their socialism; and any number of regional parties from the fifty provinces. The right that still thinks it appropriate to call itself a right but finds the maniac Fascist fringe, with its Warriors of Christ the King and its New Force Party, too alarming has its own new "parliamentary" incarnation as a party called Alianza Popular.

Then, there is the left. Forty-one years ago, the Socialists were the strongest party of the Popular Front that ruled Republican Spain, and their party has been revived—*reconstituido*, people say—by a group of young men who took over the leadership at a party congress in France three years ago, replacing old leaders, most of whom had been in Mexican exile since the war and are usually called "the Mexicans" by everybody but themselves. The young Socialists call *themselves* the Partido Socialista Obrero Español, but they are hardly a workers' party, in the way that the Communists are. (There are possibly as many lawyers in the P.S.O.E. as workers.) The party has strong bourgeois roots, and it is really a broad-based party—the only broad-based party on the left here, and the closest thing to a recognizably European national party the country has yet. This means, of course, that they are frequently accused of "pragmatism," which is a bad word on the radical left, where people keep their parties suicidally pure. The Socialists are recognized by the Socialist International as its official Spanish party. They are far to the left of the other Socialists in Western Europe, being a party so definitely out of power, but they still have been taking most of their lessons in practical politics from the West German Socialists—at least until lately, when the Marxists and the social democrats on their executive committee started arguing and some of the social democrats fled. The German Party has paid their bills for the past few years, and, some people say, chose their party secretary for them. His name is Felipe González Márquez, and he is a thirty-four-year-old lawyer who wears jeans to see the Prime Minister and has the kind of unabashed public charm that is usually reserved for rock stars.

Nobody in Madrid doubts that in the elections the Socialists, running alone as a party, will get the biggest vote on the left. They are probably the left's best hope, and they will certainly do much better than the Communists. (The polls here are predicting eight or ten per cent of the vote for the Communists, whether they have to run as independents or win the court case to legalize the Party which has started now and which the government, under pressure from the right, could conceivably drag out until the elections are over.) The Communists were the smallest part of the Spanish left during the Republic, but they came to control and tyrannize the rest of the left, because—in a country where the West has always chosen to betray its best ideals—the Soviet Union was the only source of weapons the Republican armies had. The Communists' own betrayals have never been forgiven. Socialists and other Marxists may take up the just cause of Communist legality; they still talk about the Party with a bitterness that has survived the common suffering of forty years. But the Spanish underground produced its martyrs and its heroes in the course of those years, and a lot of them were Communists, who gave the Party a powerful stature. The Communists succeeded in clandestinity where they had never been able to succeed before—they dominated Spanish labor with their Workers Commissions, and the government that held them in jail half the time had to spend the other half negotiating with them to keep peace in the factories. There are probably a hundred thousand Communist militants in Spain today. Some of the very young Communists who have been working in the barrios of Madrid lately, organizing and proselytizing, seem a little ghoulish. They are the real victims of authoritarian-



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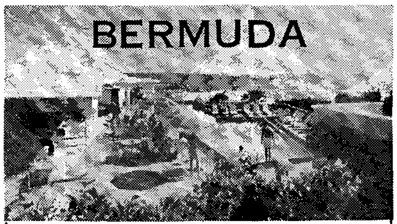

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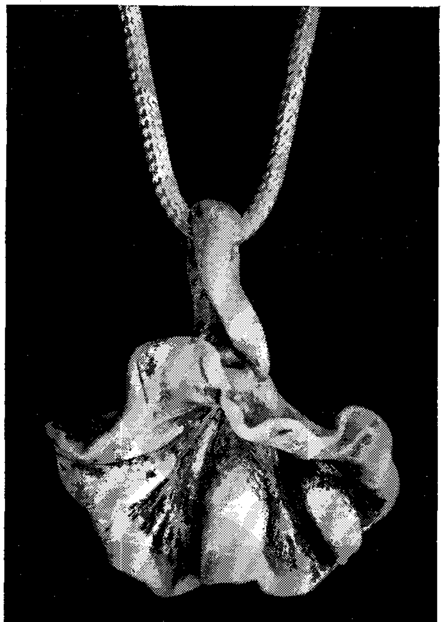
ism—willing servants to a new authority, mouthing the platitudes of five-minute doctrine, and unable to tolerate much discussion. Workers and intellectuals in the Party are much more mellow. They are delighted to be "Euro-Communists," now that the Western press has given such a comfortable name to the kind of accommodation any sane Communist in industrial Europe, where proletarian rule is impractical and proletarian revolution is impossible, would want to make. In fact, they seem to have forgotten all the contradictions of their position. They do not go around quoting Antonio Gramsci, who founded the Italian Party in 1921 and is the proper father of a new European communism, but then they do not talk Leninism anymore here, either—certainly not in public. The Fascist years have made most of them genuinely libertarian. They are at least as interested in a just society as in a Communist one. They are not much looking forward to the homecoming of Dolores Ibarruri, their own La Pasionaria of the Civil War, who is still in exile in Moscow and apparently likes to tell people that all this Party talk about democracy is ridiculous—that Communism has nothing at all to do with Western democracy or its structures. Some of them are even uncomfortable with their Party secretary, Santiago Carrillo Solares, because too many people identify him as a Communist who came into his power in the Civil War, and the right keeps trying to blame him for the massacre of political prisoners that took place at Paracuellos de Jarama in 1936. Carrillo himself seems like a model Euro-Communist these days. He talks a free-market economy, says he finds nothing disturbing about America's three Spanish military bases, and got the Party its best publicity in years when the rumor went around that Álvaro Cunhal, the Portuguese Communist Party secretary, had called him an American stooge.

For the moment, the Spanish Communists have a valuable kind of watchdog function. The left acknowledges that they are a fierce guardian of working-class interests at a time when Spain's new democracy is being planned as a very conservative arrangement. And as a party they have the most to lose from any kind of chaos, and a good deal to gain from moderation and conciliation. Their Workers Commissions police the factories now, making certain that *provocateurs* from the Fascist right and the Maoist left are kept at bay. Communists see to it that demonstrations are peaceful and strikes orderly. When



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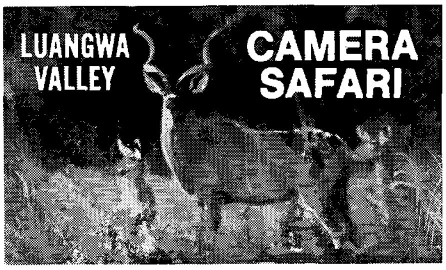

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Fascist terrorists machine-gunned five of their militants in January, they sent cadres into the streets to calm the tens of thousands of Spaniards who struck in protest—and that in itself was something that no other party in the country has the discipline to accomplish.

DEMOCRACY is a serviceable concept. All the bad debts of Franco's forty years are falling due, and from the King's perspective it makes a lot of sense to pass those debts along to the people (some of the people, anyway), whose failures will only be their own. Not that anybody wants the burden of those debts. The left certainly doesn't want them yet—it seems almost grateful for the polls that predict no more than a respectable minority vote for it. The claims of the Basques alone could break the next government, and there is no national party here that really has any idea of how to settle them. Basque nationalism comes in many forms. Most of it is mild by anyone's standards, having to do with regional autonomy, language and education, provincial government, and police and tax structures. In fact, the rural Basques tend to be as thoroughly conservative in their politics as landed peasants anywhere. Franco tried to link Basque nationalism to the Communist underground after four young Basques from the separatist group called ETA assassinated his Prime Minister, Luis Carrero Blanco, three years ago, but the separatists of ETA are a minority in the Basque-nationalist grab bag, and most of them have no particular politics anyway, beyond the mystique of a Basque state. Still, the four Basque provinces were virtually under siege at the time of Franco's death. And repression there has been sufficiently arbitrary and indiscriminate since then to have created a kind of brotherhood of victims, making every Basque a cause for every other.

The Basques are much romanticized. Their sense of race can make them surly and arrogant and xenophobic, but it also makes them exotic to Spaniards, and Spaniards tend to confuse those qualities with their own extravagant notions of dignity and honor. In fact, the Basques do not like the Spanish, and most Spaniards, under pressure, will admit that they do not much like the Basques, either. The Basques are sitting on some of the best agricultural land in Spain. Spanish industry has been concentrated in the Basque provinces and in Catalonia, to take advantage of some of the country's finest ports and possibly of the capacity for hard work

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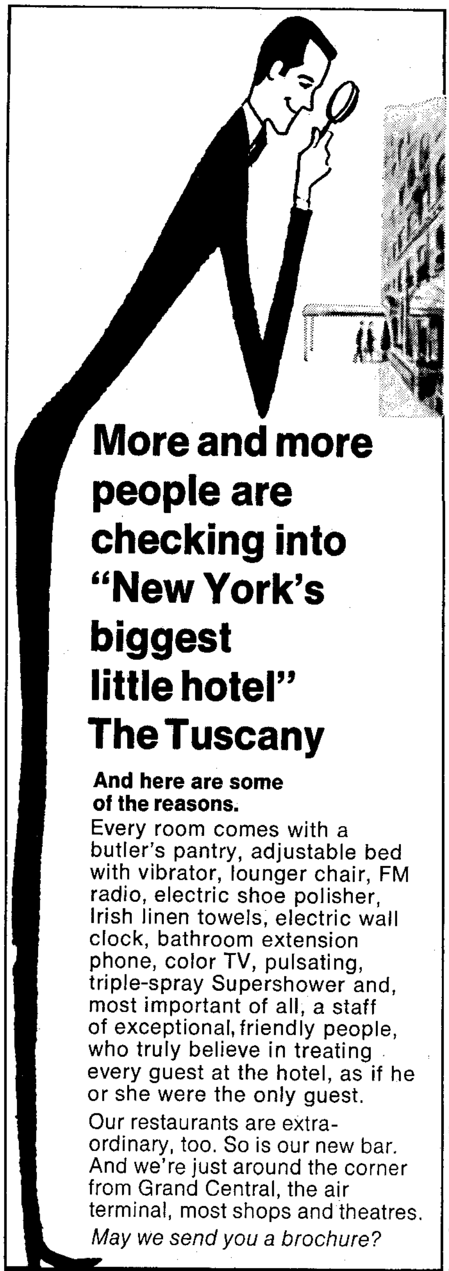

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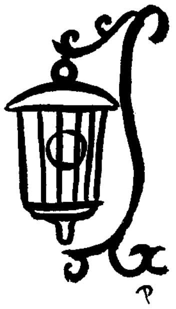
that Basques and Catalans, by reputation, possess to a degree unheard of in the legendary Spain of afternoon naps and eleven-o'clock suppers. All this has given the Basques and the Catalans—and the million southerners who by now have been recruited by the northern factories—a standard of living that economists claim is fifty per cent higher than the standard of living in any other part of the country except here. Add to the Basques' prosperity, their land, their ports, their industries, their prickly nationalism, and their history of oppression the fact that contempt for the political authority of a Madrid government amounts to its own politics in the Spanish Pyrenees, and one has a pretty good idea of what Madrileños refer to delicately as the Basque problem.

The Spanish Anarchists have left a powerful legacy in the industrial north. Anarchism as a movement was betrayed by the Communists during the Civil War—something that a good many Spanish workers are not likely to forget now—and the Anarchists themselves suffered enormously in the purges afterward. Their Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, which was the biggest and surely the most truculent union in Republican Spain, dwindled in clandestinity to a few thousand members while the Communists' Workers Commissions, supported for years through the Soviet Union, surfaced last year with some sixty thousand militants active in the country's factories. But anarchism is still a kind of controlling emotion among a great many workers in the factories of the Basque provinces and Catalonia. Workers provided Juan Carlos with nearly fifteen hundred strikes during his first year in power—in 1976 there were more strikes in Spain, where striking was still illegal, than anywhere else in Europe except possibly Italy—and they cost Spanish industry a hundred million work hours. The government has made a great deal of the fact that some ninety-four per cent of the people who voted in the referendum this December voted yes to its political-reform program. Actually, twenty-three per cent of the eligible voters abstained in that referendum, and the abstention rate in the Basque provinces was over fifty per cent. All the parties of the left had called for abstentions. They wanted to protest the fact that the government had drafted its reforms without consulting them, and they were obliged, on principle, to protest what looked then like the government's determination to keep the Communist Party illegal. But most of those abstentions were simply a traditional finger from the Spanish worker—a kind of collective *je m'en fous* to politics and politicians of any sort.

The Basques, especially, were not likely to have welcomed any gesture from Madrid by then. For forty years, Madrid had alternately neglected and abused them, and Basques like to say that the money they paid out to Madrid in taxes during those years was always returned in the form of more policemen to torment them. The Guardia Civil and the Policía Armada—which is the Guardia's big-city counterpart and is known here as the Gristapo, for reasons that have at least as much to do with its character as with the gray of its uniforms—were around before Franco. Paramilitary police amount to a sacred institution in Latin countries, but Franco's particular interpretation of the institution was more banana republic than Mediterranean. Franco built up his police until there were a hundred thousand men in the two branches, with a small-arms arsenal that people say is equal to the Army's and an even greater communications network. And those police were at the service of the regime in ways that the Army, as a conscript force, politically unreliable in its ranks, could never be. The men who volunteered for the Guardia and the Gristapo were sons of the rural poor. They came from Andalusia, and from the Estremadura, where most of the land still belongs to the rich and the aristocracy. They drifted from the latifundios where their parents worked for day wages to the factories of the north; they left as *emigrantes* for Western Europe; or they joined the police, which paid them less than their friends were making in the factories but gave them all the status of guns and motorcycles and interrogation rooms and terrifying uniforms.



It is fashionable in Madrid right now to understand the police—inasmuch as no one knows quite what to do about them beyond replacing their generals or changing their ministry and hoping for the best. Sociologists have taken to explaining police brutality in the universities in terms of class resentment, police brutality in the factory cities in terms of the frustrations of uneducated men far from their homes confronting hostile natives who often spoke a different language, insulted their children at school, overcharged their wives at the market. But the fact remains that people still tremble at the sight of a Guardia's shiny black tricorn or a Gris's submachine gun. The police have been conditioned to thuggery. They have been licensed for it and rewarded for it. They have new generals now, and new directives about due process, but some of them have simply become the off-duty terrorists of the far right, and while the right survives they are unlikely candidates for enlightenment.

EVERYBODY here talks about an economic crisis, though a crisis is not as obvious in a city where people spend a lot of time spending money as it is in, say, Seville, where fruit is rotting in warehouses because the farmers have lost their foreign markets, or in the northern ports, where Europe's second-largest shipbuilding industry is practically bankrupt. In 1950, half the Spanish population still lived off the land. Today, Spain is the tenth most highly industrialized country in the world, and its economy is an extravagant, slapdash mixture of neo-capitalism and national socialism and is suffering the sins of both systems. People estimate that roughly twenty-one per cent of all private capital investment in Spain today is foreign. And nearly half of that foreign capital is American—which may be why some of the Americans here, covering their options on the left and the right, find the Socialists a little too risky a hedge against the Communist Party and, to the amusement of the Spanish, seem to be promoting as a "left" alternative the career of a foreign-credit broker named Antonio García Lopez, who calls himself a democratic socialist and has a party, getting bank loans, to prove it.

Seven or eight big banks control the majority of Spanish investment capital, making Spain a kind of extended-family oligarchy. And the Instituto Nacional de Industria, the country's corporatist holding company, draws enough money from the public purse to control twenty per cent of Spanish industry—lining pockets along the way, subsidizing whole noncompetitive sectors of the economy, supporting a huge bureaucracy, and to this day never showing a peseta's profit on its books. The economy boomed in the sixties on expectations of endless supplies of cheap energy and endless reorders from rich Western customers. I.N.I. added to the illusion of economic health by underwriting employment in the fac-

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tories. Savings banks were required to invest as much as seventy per cent of their deposits in the public sector, and I.N.I. channelled those loans right into the industries where the important capitalists and the foreigners had their money. Networks of favoritism and corruption made millionaires of people the regime liked and shut out most people who had not made the appropriate arrangements with Franco's ministers. And through those years the multinationals shaped Spanish industry to their own networks, producing oil-dependent goods for export and all sorts of gadgets for the Spaniards, who were getting rich enough for air-conditioners and television sets. Spanish industry created a million and a half new jobs in the nineteen-sixties, but no one in power bothered to think about the country's real needs or about producing for those needs, or anticipated the kind of crisis it is experiencing now.

Spain was nearly self-sufficient agriculturally ten years ago; now it has to import food at a cost of two and a half billion dollars a year, which is over half its balance-of-payments deficit. And there is no foreign market for a lot of its own produce, because it has to pass along an increase of more than four hundred per cent in the cost of the oil it buys from the Middle East. Spain cannot export its unemployment anymore, either, now that Western Europe has stopped admitting immigrant labor. Some eighty thousand Spaniards left for Western Europe almost every year in the nineteen-sixties, and there are still at least a million and a half Spaniards—ten per cent of the labor force—working in factories abroad. But at home the emigration from the farms to the cities continues, and with no jobs for those new emigrants Spain has three-quarters of a million people unemployed. Workers who are laid off get unemployment compensation. There is no welfare system, though—which means that young men and women who have never had a job do not get any income from the government, and neither do the *retornados*, who are coming home from West Germany and France and Switzerland at the rate of forty or fifty thousand a year. The currency that those workers sent to Spain used to keep the balance of payments here fairly healthy. So did the money that tourists spent in Spain, back when there were nearly as many tourists in the country in the course of a year as there were Spaniards. But a lot of the people who took advantage of Spain's particular brand of packaged mass tourism cannot afford to come

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here anymore, what with twenty-per-cent inflation in the country, and the people who could afford to come want more for their money than a tacky hotel on a fifty-thousand-bed stretch of the Costa del Sol.

SPAIN wants to enter Europe—which, for arcane reasons of their own, is the way Europeans who have not "entered" always talk about applying for admission to the Common Market. Europe is the new panacea being offered to the Spanish, replacing subsidized full employment and the beneficence of the multinationals. Sixty per cent of Spain's export trade has been with Western Europe, and, even as an outsider, Spain has lost its competitive edge in markets there. Countries like Tunisia and Algeria and Turkey have better tariff arrangements with the European Economic Community for their produce than Spain has. The other Europeans are too busy trying to absorb their own oil costs to pay the import duty on a piece of Spanish machinery whose price already reflects the extravagant cost of oil. By now, Spaniards are like anxious parents: they want their oranges to have all the advantages of an Italian orange; their ball bearings to have the advantages of a ball bearing from Cologne. They want markets for their cattle feed, because American speculators built so many feed-processing plants for them in the nineteen-sixties that now, to keep those plants going, they have to pay American farmers for four million tons of fodder corn and soybeans every year. They tend to forget that for its younger members Europe usually ends up as an expensive subsidy of German factories and French farms.

There are people here who think that for Spain the money is in South America, not Europe; Franco's nephew Nicolás, an enterprising promoter who calls himself an Atlanticist, claims to have visited Jimmy Carter with a scheme for pooling American dollars and Spanish talent to make a killing there. But for most Spaniards Europe means more than an insider's access to markets and commercial banks and the credit those banks control. It carries the status of sophistication. For all their macho, the Spanish are intimidated by their neighbors. They think of the French—or the Germans or the Belgians—as an élite of dazzling cool and of technocratic competence. And if that élite demands the rituals of democracy from its members, then Spain's new businessmen are agreeable, because the handle of Spanish Fascism has

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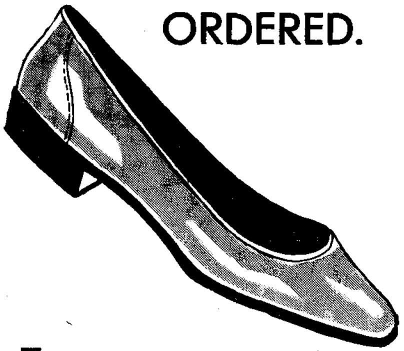

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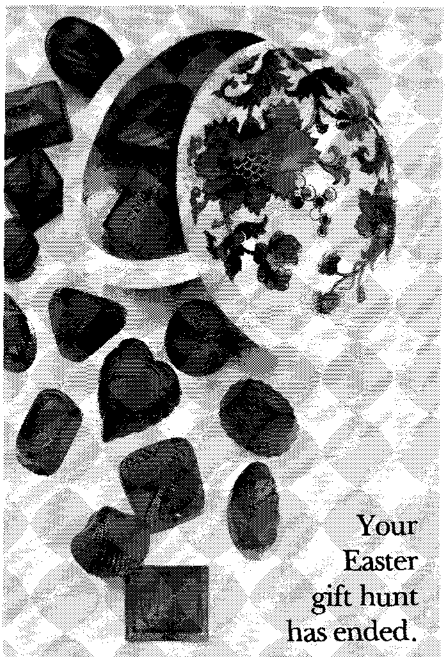
already got to be something of an embarrassment for them in their dealings—something, they sense, that makes them look pathetic. They are prepared to keep a king who can deliver Europe to them, and, whatever Juan Carlos' credentials as a born-again democrat, he is obviously willing to make the trade. He managed to get rid of Carlos Arias Navarro, the Prime Minister he inherited from Franco, early last summer, and by this summer, after the elections, he will have got rid of a lot of the old Franquistas in the Cortes and, presumably, on the Council of the Realm, where ten members come from the Cortes and the seven others are ex officio.

The Councillors now, with their enormous interest in the oligarchy, run an extremely narrow gamut of political reaction, regarding the few conservative Christian Democrats among them as seditious radicals. The Spanish monarchy is not their highest priority. They would rather lose a king than admit democracy to Spain, but as a group they are politically and physically exhausted, and their power, which is the power of the Fascist state in general, has already been shaken—by the assassination of Carrero Blanco, by the revolution in Portugal, and, of course, by Franco's death. The younger capitalists assume, correctly, that the economy (and their interest in it) cannot recover without a change in the style, if not the substance, of government, and Juan Carlos must have known from the beginning that he had a better chance with them than with the old Fascists, who would have made him the first sacrifice of an inevitable catastrophe. He needed a constituency, as it were. He had no sanction for his authority from the Church. The Spanish Church, with its brilliant instinct for survival, broke with the regime after Vatican II in order to "serve the people," and has officially sworn off politics, and even contributed its share of radical priests to the left here. (It is still the Church of State, nonetheless; it takes a few billion pesetas a year from the government, keeps a concordat with Rome which lets it do a lively business in annulments, controls most of the secondary and much of the primary education, and sees to it that contraception, along with abortion and divorce, remains illegal and that no one can have a civil marriage without first signing a declaration of apostasy.) But the King did have the loyalty of the Army after Franco died. He had trained with the Army, and although many of the old generals of the Fascist high com-



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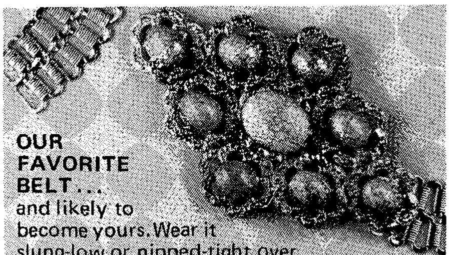

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mand were still alive—in this country only the left, apparently, dies young—a new generation of officers were his friends. They were the majority eighteen months ago, and now that Juan Carlos has started to shuffle the important posts and has made his favorite general the First Deputy-Premier, they have considerable power. Those officers accept the King. They have given him a blank check, and Juan Carlos—having perhaps learned the lesson of his brother-in-law Constantine that colonels who have the political power to maintain a king are sooner or later going to take his job—has used the blank check to start transferring political power to civilian hands.

The King can keep the Army out of politics. He is the only man in Spain right now who can, and this is the source of his control, the reason the left tries so hard to like him. The Army wants to enter Europe, too. It is the conquering Army of Spain, but it has not had anything remotely glorious to do for the past thirty-eight years. After the war, it made a safe, respectable career for the extra sons of petit-bourgeois families, and by now there are seventeen thousand officers in the Spanish armed forces—one for every seventeen men—who have been neglected. Franco never spent much money on them. He used the police on the people, and never provided his Army with so much as a minor war. The defense of Europe sounds very glamorous to that Army. It sounds like all the status symbols of a modern military—expensive weapons, fancy technology, junkets to Brussels, NATO conferences, a brisk European pace of consultations and inspections, strategic studies, joint maneuvers, even a crack at the paperwork no one else wants. And so the Army is willing now to step aside for the *transición*—unless, that is, there is violence in the streets or insurrection in the Basque provinces. The Fascist gangs are trying hard to provoke violence. They know the terror that the memory of half a million dead inspires. History haunts the Spanish. The two most popular books in Madrid these days are a novel about what would have happened here if the Republicans had won the war and a memoir of Franco written by an adoring cousin.

—JANE KRAMER

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Whatever he is, Sadlowski is certainly this year's stormy petrol in union politics.
—*Hibbing (Minn.) Daily Tribune.*

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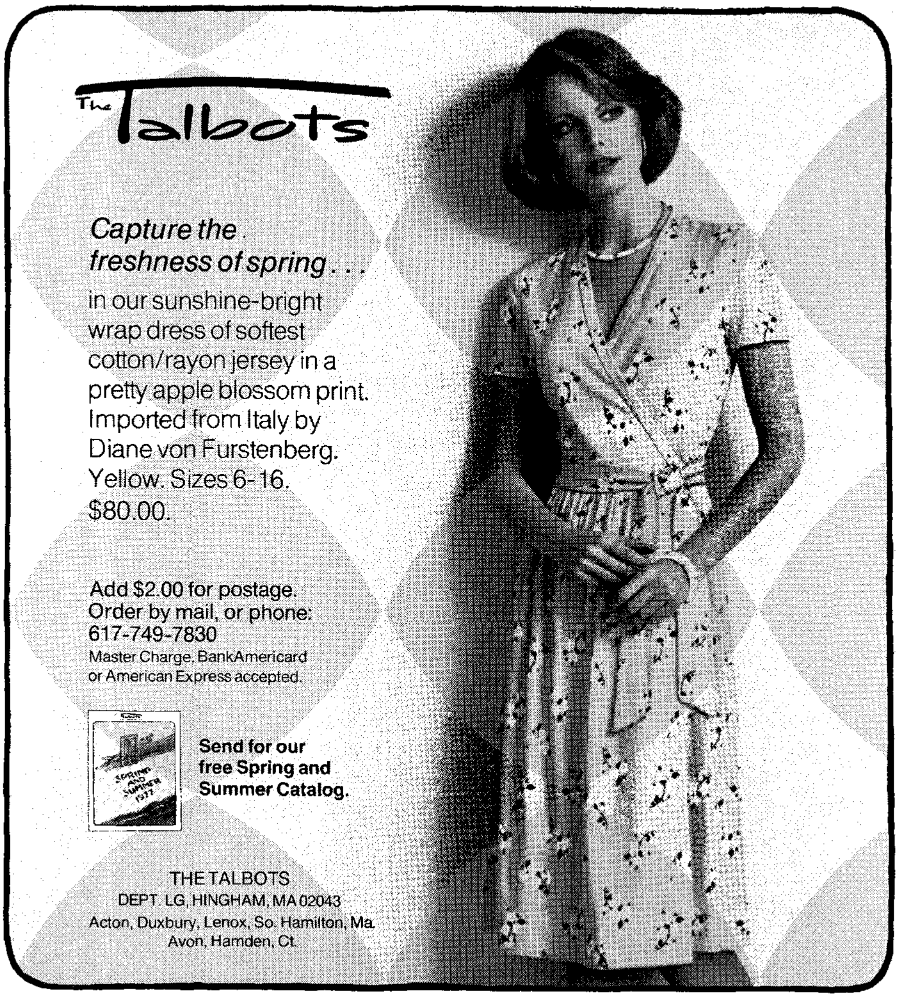

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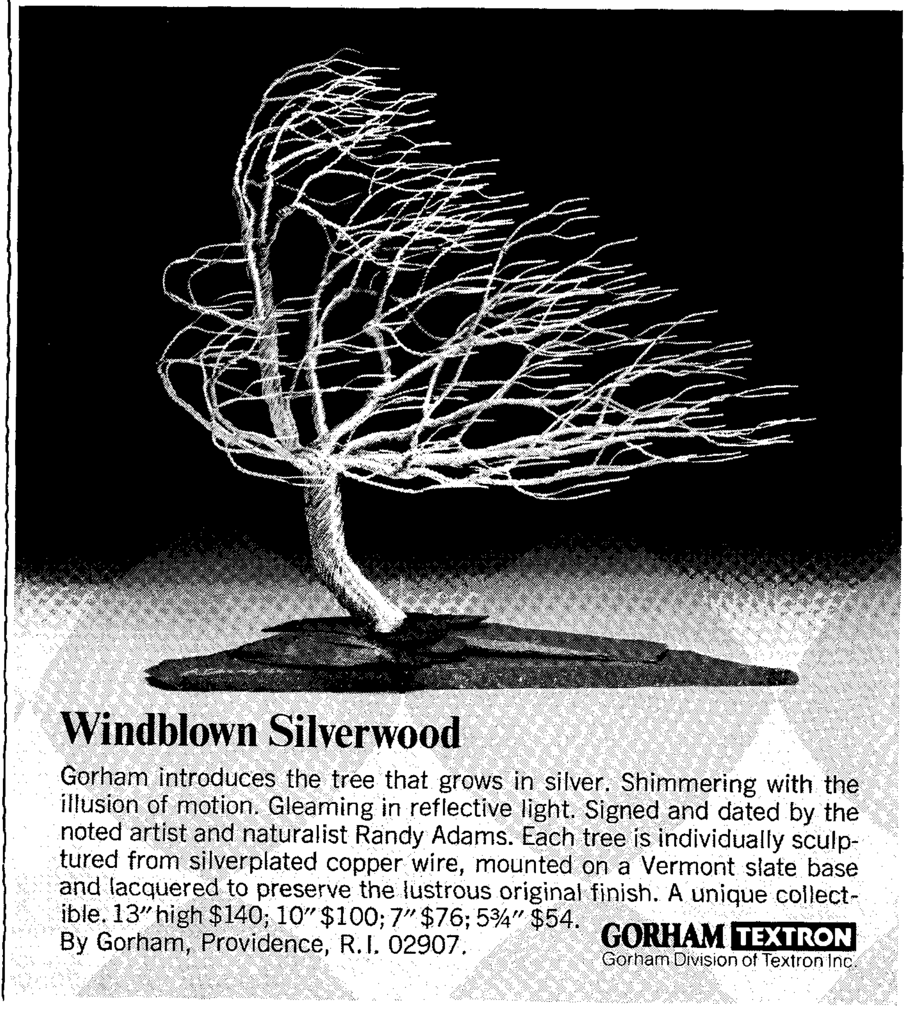

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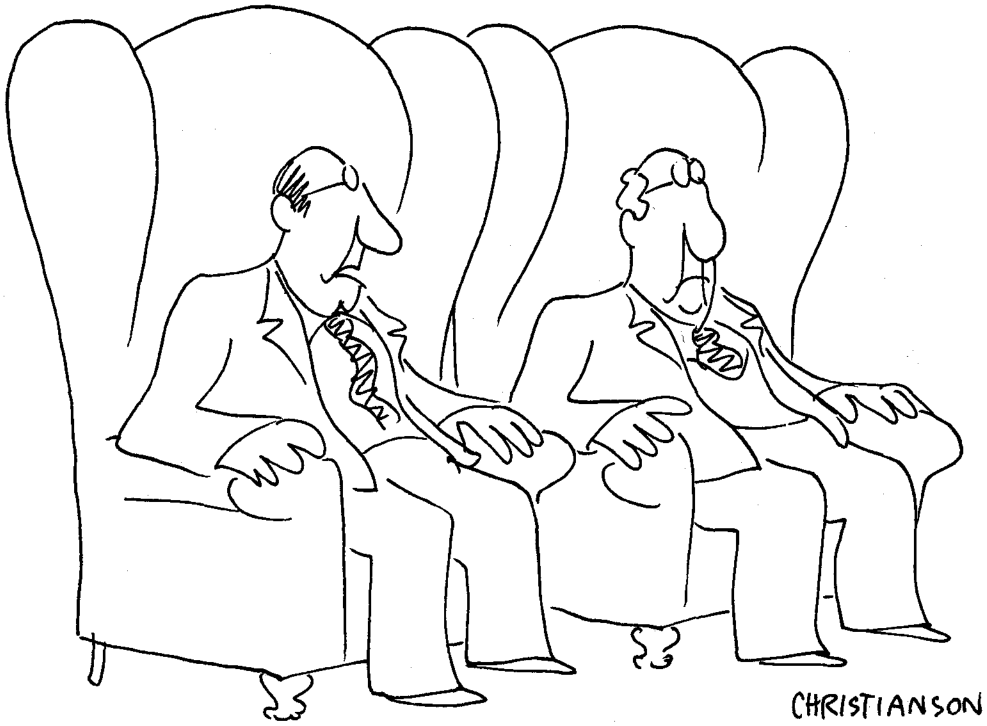
"WELCOME TO L.A." was written around a suite of nine rock songs by Richard Baskin called "City of the One Night Stands," and its mood is whimsical, laid-back alienation. The ten characters tell us that L.A. is "daydreams in traffic" and that "people deceive themselves here;" they sing about "the stale taste of decay" and exhibit the very latest in quirks and nervous disorders. The central figure is a young composer (Keith Carradine) with an endless supply of flask-size bottles of Southern Comfort in his pocket, in his car, in his bed; he drinks without its having any effect on him. That makes him the hero right there. He has come home after three years in London, because a rock star is recording an album of his songs—"City of the One Night Stands," naturally—and he effortlessly attracts a collection of lost women. Lauren Hutton, his father's smiley, fey mistress, is a photographer who shoots corners, and sits in them, too. Geraldine Chaplin, also a corner freak, is a businessman's lonely, movie-struck wife; she pretends she's Camille and takes Valium for her cough. Sally Kellerman, the realtor who finds him his house, is a desperate vamp, stifling from lack of love. Sissy Spacek, his housemaid, has starry dead eyes—she vacuums topless, and hustles a little on the side. Viveca Lindfors is his cynical, fiftyish agent—she laughs and cries at the same time, flashes her eyes tempestuously, and goes through the vocal histrionics of a seedy Carmen, all to show us the plight of the unwanted older woman. Denver Pyle plays Carradine's Colonel Sanders-like yogurt-millionaire father. Harvey Keitel is the father's hardworking assistant; he's Chaplin's husband and Spacek's customer. John Considine is Kellerman's furniture-dealer husband—a muscular stud who looks like an overused department-store mannequin. The idea is that they all screw around but they're really looking for— what? Values? Love? Religion? Set, shamelessly, at Christmas, "Welcome to L.A." is a tale of beautiful sad people who have everything and nothing.

Alan Rudolph, who wrote and directed the film (it's his first time as director), is literary in a sub-literate way. He overvalues mournful poetic thoughts: his characters say a line and then stare at the camera, so that the words will have enough dead space around them to impress us. The words are like feathers drifting to earth—the picture seems drugged. Partly this is because of Baskin's sick-soul-of-Los Angeles songs. You can't tell one from another, and, as the tenth major character—the rock star doing the album—Baskin sings most of them himself. He sings like someone trying to play the double bass who doesn't know how; the quavering anal growl on the sound track might be Kissinger serenading NBC. Baskin is so serious he won't even grant us the relief of a few inflections. With his Versailles-fop hairdo and his stone-age frown, he leans toward the mike, heavy with creativity.

Alan Rudolph was Robert Altman's assistant on "Nashville," and Baskin, who played Frog, did the musical arrangements. Altman enabled them to make "Welcome to L.A." by functioning as its producer. It's quite possible that Rudolph, who seems to have tried to make a "Nashville" about Los Angeles, wasn't fully conscious that in several sequences he was coming mortifyingly close to plagiarism. (Carradine once again phones a married woman when her husband is at home; Geraldine Chaplin, who used a tape recorder in "Nashville," talks while writing in a notebook.) The spirit of the film is, however, altogether different: it's stagnant—an American version of a European "art film" with the characters in their solitude wandering around Capri in winter. Rudolph is trying for a tone poem, but, like Baskin, he's got only one tone. "Welcome to L.A." is an Altman film with all the juice squeezed out.

The actors (many of them from the Altman stock company) perform attentively, but they're undirected, and you can sense their unease. The singer that Carradine played in "Nashville" was petulant and narcissistic; he was a sexy little boy grown tall, and you could feel how his dissatisfaction drew women to him. Here, with a hunk of hair on his chin, a squashed little Irish hat, and a big bow tie, Carradine looks like a goat at a village fair. The author-director uses Carradine as a deliberate blank at the center of the film and at the same time oversells us on his quizzical-leprechaun beauty. Even Carradine's singing lacks the sexual plangency it had in "Nashville," since he's singing only to himself, and Baskin's guru-wisdom lyrics—Leonard Cohen turned into Edgar Guest—are no aphrodisiac. Carradine's fixation on the wiggy, coy wife played by Geraldine Chaplin seems to be based on charity: she's the neediest case. And this actress, who in "Buffalo Bill and the Indians" registered a whole battery of emotions in the second's panic before she got a word out, can't find a clue to what she should express. The mixture of impishness and terror in her eyes is glazed before the film is over. As her husband, a middle-class man with fluffy tinted hair, Harvey Keitel looks half asleep.



"And I say you can keep a good man down."

Keitel needs his usual intensity—he needs his meanness and blowups; miscast here, he's bland and wooden. There's a good script idea behind this businessman's getting turned on by a promotion and wanting a new affair, but the director is so high on tangents that this scene, like the others, has no core. In offscreen life, people generally manage to have some fun at the beginning of affairs—things don't go sour until later. Here, the affairs start at such a low energy level that when Diahann Abbott, in a small part as the millionaire's receptionist, goes to bed with Carradine, her lush, tropical sexiness seems to belong to another movie—where people enjoy themselves. The other characters get hot only when they look in the mirror. Rudolph has emptied his L.A.: there are a few minor roles but there are no extras in the film, and there's no sense of anyone living in the city except in this prosperous, shell-shocked, love-hungry way. (At one point, the Screen Extras Guild picketed the production, thinking it must be using nonunion extras.)

Rudolph's conception called for a totally designed look; in the homes and offices, the performers move around in their jewelled frames. Nothing is casual, to be perceived or ignored at will; the paintings and furnishings and art objects are marked out for us, like the words. Rudolph is totally explicit yet completely vague—there are no underpinnings for what the people do. He worked on the script of "Buffalo Bill and the Indians," which suffered from a similar floating explicitness. With Rudolph, you're told everything, and it's all generalizations. This film takes place—spiritually—at sunset, and the cinematographer, Dave Myers, sustains an amber calendar-art quality, naturally lighted yet so clear it has a glitter: L.A. becomes a supernal city. The film is a considerable technical achievement for a first-time director, and it was made for $1,200,000 at a time when the average Hollywood picture costs $4,000,000. But for the viewer this accomplishment doesn't count for much.

There's an irritating quality about the film's sophomoric homilies and pronouncements. It wears its existential despair like a black turtleneck sweater, for effect. Rudolph's blank hero drives around the way Antonioni's characters used to walk—aimlessly, to express disconnectedness. The director appears to be so innocent of the past that he's reinvented the clichés of the sixties; it may be that Altman's are the only movies he knows. Tuesday Weld already did this

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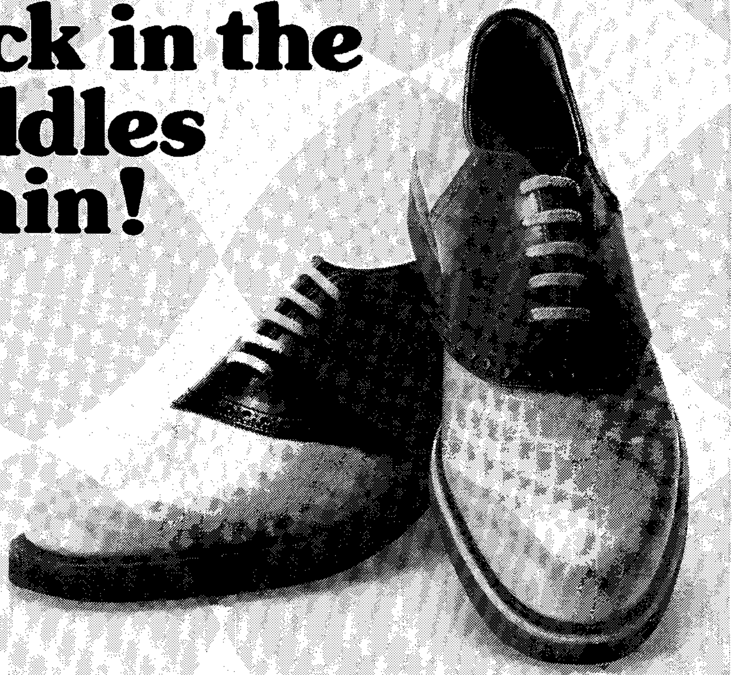

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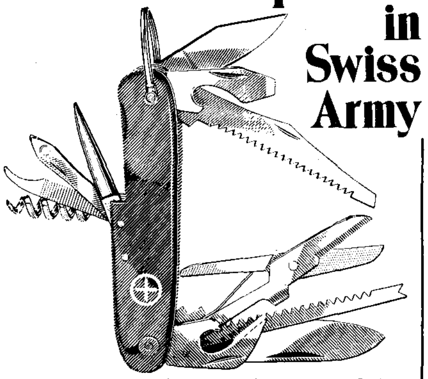

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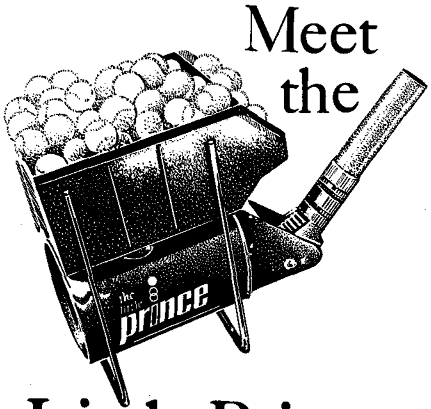
anomic driving in "Play It As It Lays," and, whatever the metaphoric purposes, ten characters suffering from anomie is too much—it's a goddam epidemic.

GÉRARD DEPARDIEU has huge features—a long, thick nose and a lantern jaw. He moves with the sturdiness of a robust peasant, and acts with everything—his beer-barrel chest, his lank, dirty blond hair, his simian arms. Depardieu redeems physical coarseness; he's both earth and spirit, like the peasants in a Piero della Francesca. In the Swiss writer-director Claude Goretta's "The Wonderful Crook" ("Pas Si Méchant Que Ça"), Depardieu plays Pierre, a contented married man, a workman employed in his father's furniture factory. When his glum, embittered father (Jacques Debary) has a stroke, Pierre is in charge. He discovers then what was gnawing at his father: the world has moved into the age of plastics, and nobody is buying the expensive, handcrafted wood furniture that the factory turns out. Faced with the responsibility of meeting the payroll, the only thing Pierre can think to do is to rob a bank. And to meet the next payroll, another bank, or perhaps a supermarket. It's like a child's game that he takes up; in his heart Pierre is never a robber, and he's innocently considerate of his victims. He's a petit-bourgeois *Robin Hood with a bad stomach.* His direct solution to the problem of how to handle the burden his father passed over to him is simply consistent with his generosity, his limited outlook, and his essential caged animality.

The film is based on an actual case; Goretta (his last film was "The Invitation") has given it a provincial setting and developed it like a subdued piano concerto, with Depardieu as his piano. Pierre loves his wife, Marthe (Dominique Labourier), but in the course of a robbery he meets Nelly (Marlène Jobert). She becomes his mistress and confederate, and he loves her, too. As in the Alec Guinness comedy "The Captain's Paradise," each woman is unhappy because she's deprived of the half of the man's life that he shares with the other. But this isn't played for farce; rather, we feel the wife's sense of loss and Pierre's misery at having shut part of himself off from her.

Yet Goretta doesn't seem to have had enough to go out and make a movie about; "The Wonderful Crook" starves the viewer's mind. Goretta develops the small stresses and breaks of feeling, but his wheels grind so fine that when a subsidiary character (Philippe Léotard, as Nelly's former lover) turns



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up, we glom on to him gratefully, expectantly. And when there's a textural bit of business (a bar scene, with an Italian worker drunkenly dancing with a vase of flowers, which is sure to be smashed) we immediately register it as a motif. In other films, Depardieu has demonstrated an outlaw side, similar to Brando's, but Goretta doesn't want that side; there's only one scene in which Pierre reveals anything uncontrollable—when he's swirling around, swinging his little son in the air, and he experiences the same exciting vertigo as the child. Goretta's conception requires that Pierre's criminal activity frighten him and isolate him from everyone but his confederate, and while we wait for the situation to be resolved Depardieu's quietly despairing face is all we've got to look at. The pacing is determinedly sensitive, academic; we become impatient with Pierre—his arrest is our reprieve. The cinematographer, Renato Berta, uses natural light for a lustrous, even-tempered effect. You know you're seeing a film made by artists—in fact, there is never a moment when you're not conscious that this is a film made by artists. When a bad film is as cleanly made as this one, there are no cheap thrills to sustain you, no rotten acting to giggle at. No mistakes. You have to sit there and appreciate.

—PAULINE KAEL

EDITORS' NOTE: Pauline Kael and Penelope Gilliatt alternate as *The New Yorker's* film critic, in periods of six months each. With this column, Miss Kael concludes her current six-month period. Miss Gilliatt will appear next week.

●

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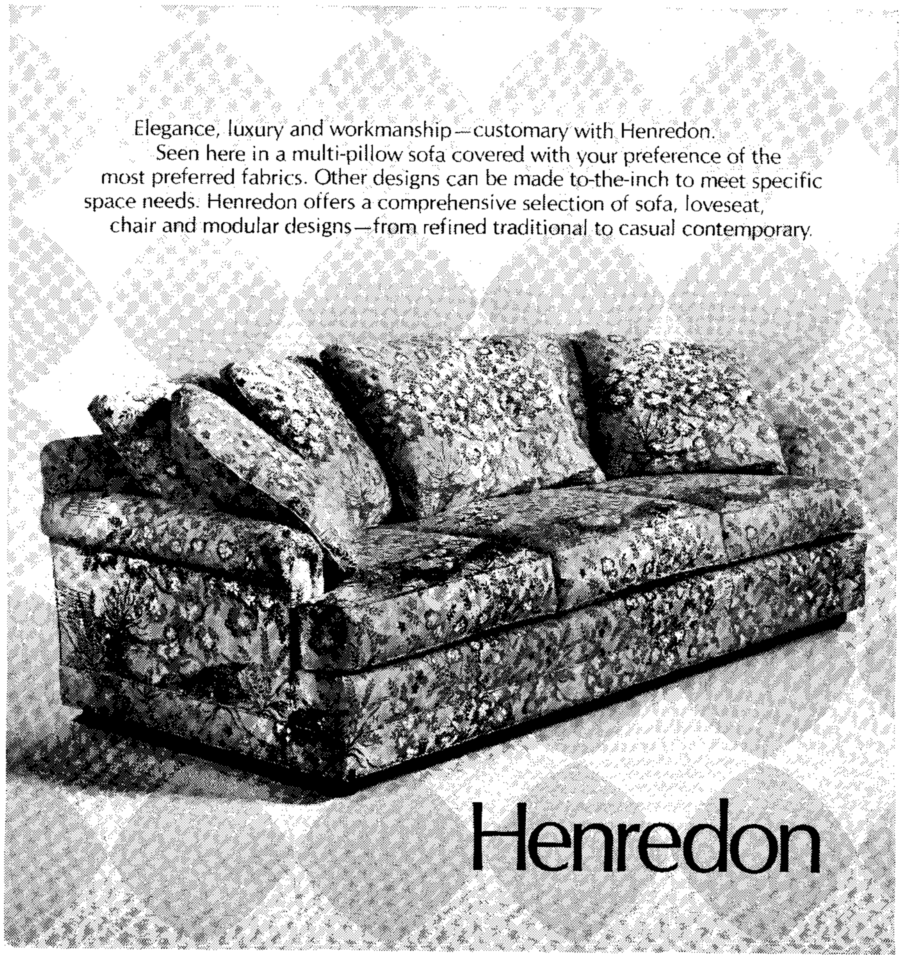
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DANCING

Higher and Higher

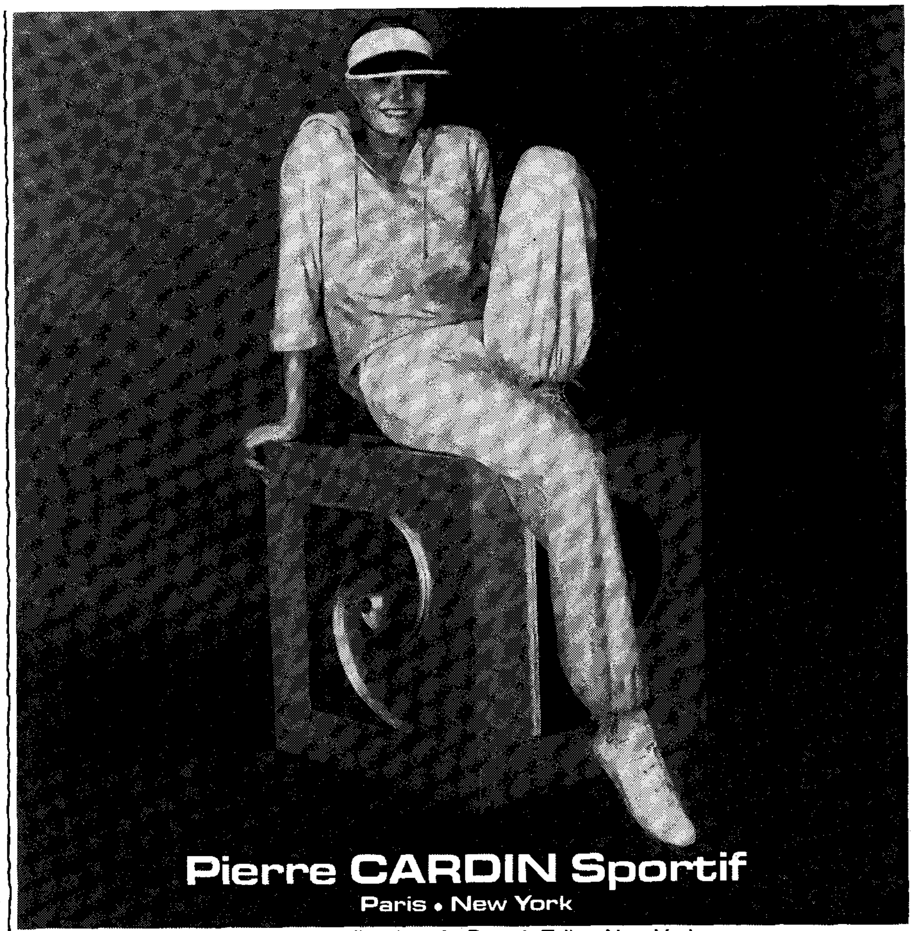
THE New York City Ballet closed its New York season on a recent Sunday night and reopened the following Tuesday in Washington, where it played through the end of last week. When this annual New York-Washington season was initiated, a few years ago, I remember hearing with some surprise about the sold-out houses and enthusiastic audiences with which Washington greeted ballets that had gone stale in New York. This year, the houses were still sold out, and the company needed its three weeks at the Kennedy Center, having lost six weeks in New York to the orchestra's strike. But what made the Washington extension really gratifying was the new level of performance the company has reached in the past year. The level was still rising when the State Theatre engagement ended. The ballets on that last weekend included some of the same ones that Washington had applauded three years ago—only they were no longer stale. A fresh wind seems to have seized the dancers and scattered all traces of the slump of the early seventies.

Individual careers soared during that low period—Patricia McBride's, Peter Martins', Gelsey Kirkland's, Merrill Ashley's, to name only the most spectacular—but everyone knows that the real strength of the New York City Ballet is not in its featured dancers; it's in the fertilizing genius of Balanchine. The depression—and those intermittent "hot" spells that made the depression seem even bleaker—could plausibly have been keyed to Balanchine's creativity. After "Who Cares?" (1970), Balanchine seemed generally disinclined to do very much for the company unless he could work himself up to the challenge of a tour de force. There were blahs on either side of the Stravinsky Festival of 1972 (for which he staged nine ballets), and then a restless, inconclusive period until the Ravel festival injected another giant dose of choreography. Inside and outside both festivals, he produced the work of junior choreographers and gave Jerome Robbins carte blanche; he also supervised the staging, by Alexandra Danilova, of two works from the past, "Chopiniana" and "Coppélia." On "Chopiniana" he imposed an experiment in distillation which failed. The "Coppélia" combined the best of its tradition with some new dances by Balanchine. Apart from an almost wholly original third act, he seemed to be following a policy of selective intervention. (Although the production is a great success, I wish he would intervene a little more.) Some of the dancers took handily to the opportunities that these new ballets provided for them; a few throve on general repertory; others did neither. The company as a whole moved full speed ahead only when Balanchine or Robbins did, and the long-held theory that it looks its best in their latest inventions certainly seemed realistic at a time when "Stravinsky Violin Concerto" was being more authoritatively performed than "Agon." The theory still makes a lot of sense, since the latest inventions are those with which the dancers feel personally identified. But the classics of the repertory suffered. It was a time when one could see a better "Evening's Waltzes" than "Liebeslieder Walzer," a better "Suite No. 3" (its first three movements belong to this period) than "Serenade," a better "Dances at a Gathering" or "Goldberg Variations" or "Duo Concertant" than "Symphony in C" or "Divertimento No. 15" or "Apollo." I think I first felt the fresh wind that seems so strong now when "The Four Temperaments" was revived in 1975, with a cast that had never done it before—a revival that is still holding its ground despite a major piece of miscasting in Washington (Peter Naumann in Phlegmatic). In 1973, there had been a revival almost as startling: "Ballet Imperial." But this was more properly a revision than a revival. Balanchine had scrapped the Imperial Russian décor, rechoreographed a passage in the Andante, and redirected the ensemble into an easier and fuller flow of movement. He also gave the ballet new and awful costumes and a new and unepigrammatic title, "Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 2." But a company that used to fight its way through the piece now found that it could relax and command it. The ballet came up more beautiful, more nervously powerful than ever, and looking as much a New York City Ballet classic as "Concerto Barocco," which was created in the same year, 1941 (for American Ballet Caravan).

"Concerto Barocco" is singularly blessed; nearly everyone who has ever danced it in this company has done it justice—at least, as far back as I can remember, which is back to its black-bathing-suit era at the City Center. By its consistently high standard of performance the company conveys its understanding of this ballet as the cornerstone of the repertory. Yet there have been performances—recent ones—that went beyond stewardship into revelation, and these were the performances of Gelsey Kirkland just before she left the company and of Suzanne Farrell just after she returned. If these two quite different dancers could bring so much to a ballet that could be great without them, was it really impossible for the company to revitalize a repertory full of established masterpieces, nearly all of which had been created before most of the dancers were born?

Balanchine dancers talking about Balanchine's repertory will usually praise it in terms that have nothing to do with their own contribution to it—or even with the possibility of their contributing to it. The general belief is that Balanchine's great ballets are dancer-proof—that they'll carry their message to the audience right through whoever happens to be dancing. One of the dancers has said, "You could put a fairly bland dancer in the second movement of 'Symphony in C' and it would still be effective." You could and it would, but although an experienced Balanchine audience knows how to adjust its connoisseurship to levels of performance, no audience in the world likes having to keep adjusting downward. In time, the viewer comes to accept his connoisseurship as an idiotic form of Platonism, and he may stop going to the theatre, or go elsewhere for the thrill of a star performance. With other companies, one has a right to demand star performance, simply because it's the only thing that makes going there worthwhile. New York City Ballet dancers believe in Balanchine devoutly, but they have sometimes appeared to be leaning too hard on the Great Provider and forgetting that the audience is really looking at them. (Many times, I have wished the balcony would let down a banner that reads "WE SEE YOU.") The good side of this, of course, is that the dancers aren't tempted to woo the audience egotistically or play into its hands. Farrell exemplifies this ethical severity; she's not indifferent to the audience, but she lets us know she'd dance just as marvellously if we were not there to applaud her. We have come to demand from her everything she has to give because she demands it from herself. It's absurd to think that in respect to stars audience expectations may be greater at other companies than at the New York City Ballet, but unfortunately, because of publicity, they are. And a starstruck audience will confirm its expectations by applauding mightily even when stars haven't given a star performance. The policy at N.Y.C.B. is not really anti-star; it's not to build expectations. Casts aren't publicized in advance, and the roster doesn't isolate the principals from the corps except in out-of-town engagements. It's an anti-New York policy—the New York of the tyrannical, smothering, fall-guy audience. In New York, the job the New York City Ballet is uniquely equipped to perform is to tell us what real stardom is all about. These past few seasons, for the first time in more years than I like to remember, the whole company has begun to come alive to its responsibility.

Balanchine made "Chaconne" and "Union Jack" during this period, revived (or revised) "Square Dance," and fiddled with a number of repertory pieces. The new additions are remarkable and fascinating in their different ways, but I'm not sure that they have very much to do with the strength the company is now displaying. For once, the dancers don't seem to be feeding off Balanchine's latest enterprises; they're showing their form in places where one might have stopped looking—in standards like "Symphony in C" and "Serenade." Earlier in the year, there were a few performances of "Agon" that restored to it the tension and wit of shining memory. It was a triumph for the whole company. The latest triumph may be the most offbeat one the company has ever had. "Bournonville Divertissements" is a selection of highlights from the classical repertory of the mid-nineteenth century. The style is strange, the technique difficult. Dancers who were used to custom-fit roles could be expected to flounder. With his misbegotten "Chopiniana," Balanchine tried to force the connection between Fokine's masterpiece and his own method; possibly it's a connection that can only be sensed, not demonstrated. With Bournonville, he lets the dances, as staged by Stanley Williams, speak for themselves, and we can really see that they're part of his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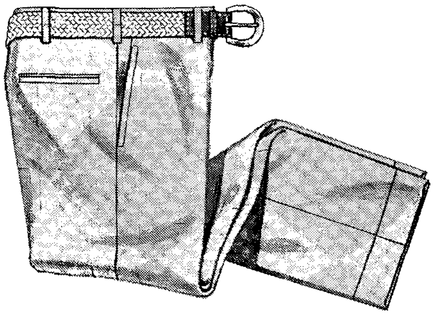

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heritage. The dancers all seem to realize this; when last seen, they were still polishing their brilliant performances. In the first performances, which I reviewed a few weeks ago, Patricia McBride looked out of her element. By closing night in New York, she'd found some magic key to the buoyancy she needs for the part, and was transforming herself into a feather-light Bournonville soubrette. Farrell had made comparable adjustments in her performance. Though these developments were unpredictable, and even unnecessary (we don't expect the grandest of Balanchine's ballerinas to be wonderful in an alien tradition), they show us how stardom can be earned.

In Washington, I saw Merrill Ashley's début in "Square Dance," and it is the performance the ballet has been waiting for—full of sharp, bright photoflash pictures. The old version of the role was more complex than the version Ashley has been given to do; she could be the one to restore the exploding passage of beats in the finale or, in the pas de deux, the opening into arabesque that ends each sequence of double turns under the boy's arms. In an earlier début, Ashley showed her long keen line in the "Symphony in C" adagio—that "surefire" role. It was an enchantingly correct performance, but her forthright power had little chance to show itself in the Violette Verdy role in "Emeralds;" with little piquancy and no rubato, she was *only* correct. One of the major depressants a few years ago was the dearth of ballerinas in a company that has usually enjoyed a surfeit. Besides Ashley (who is still officially a non-principal), there's a flock of juniors who can give performances of ballerina quality. The male wing at the same level has acquired vigor and variety; I see no new Villellas, but the male ensemble of "Bournonville Divertissements" wouldn't have been possible in Villella's day. In "Symphony in C," "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet," and "Jewels," the corps work was smooth and zestful; in "Serenade" it outshone the principals. The girls are not as spikily eccentric as they used to be, or as ragged in ensembles—except, of course, when Balanchine betrays them with configurations that emphasize those frailties (as in "Symphony in Three Movements").

Balanchine's tinkerings have effected some changes in the Elegy of "Serenade," none of which strike me as happy ones. The two girls whom the male soloist lowers to a reclining position, with their feet braced against his, now take a lunge pose before subsiding to

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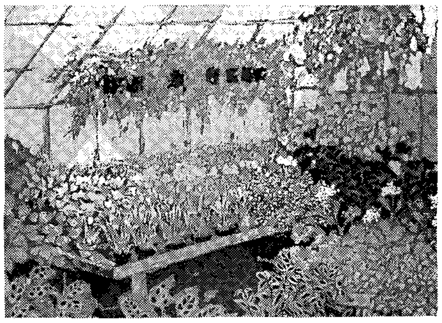

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the floor. It's a minor detail, and I can only explain my objection to it by saying that the interrupted descent to the floor is emotionally insignificant. I feel the same way about the moment when one of those girls turns a series of stabbing pirouettes and then collapses sideways in her partner's arms. Years ago, she would collapse while turning and would continue to turn spastically while he held her a foot above the ground. The three female principals in the Elegy now go through it with their hair hanging loose, which may be the way it was done once upon a time but looks out of place today. The sisterhood of the corps in "Serenade," which has expanded through the years as Balanchine expanded the choreography, is in its anonymity one of the most moving images we have in all ballet, and the three new heads of hair in the last movement violate the image. And, as the two lines of girls cross behind the soloist in the Waltz, what has happened to the Jessie Matthews backbends they used to do?

In "Emeralds," a new epilogue for the major characters in the ballet consists of a strainingly supported adagio in which all seven of them seem to be trying to hold together the remnants of a fragile dreamworld. After the women have vanished, the three men—poets or troubadours from an age of chivalry—sink to one knee and lift an arm in tribute. At the final matinée in New York, the conductor (Hugo Fiorato) adopted a tempo that brought the ballet to a fine slow boil, and then held to a more moderate beat than is customary for "Rubies" and "Diamonds." This spacious and clear way of performing "Jewels" makes it glow rather than glitter; everyone danced with untaxed transparency. And at the previous matinée Robert Irving performed one of his miracles of versatility by following the rattling batch of nineteenth-century dance scores for the Bournonville—a kind of multi-gaited music in which dancing is implicit—with Schoenberg's orchestration of Brahms, a complex, *schmalzig* concert-hall score that becomes dance music only because we have a Balanchine ballet to go with it. Neither "Jewels" nor "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet" is a Balanchine masterpiece, but that hardly matters when they're given de-luxe treatment both onstage and in the pit. We have the ballets that *are* Balanchine masterpieces, and the company has reserves of dance power it has not yet completely displayed. We may be entering a golden age of performance.

—ARLENE CROCE

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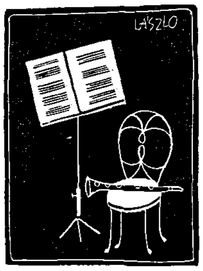
MUSICAL EVENTS

Catching Up

AN all-Penderecki concert in Carnegie Hall, given by the Philharmonia Orchestra of Yale, the Westminster Choir, and the Trinity Choristers, conducted by the composer, provided a chance of catching up with two of Penderecki's fairly recent (1974) compositions—"Als Jakob Erwachte . . ." and the Magnificat—in live sound. (Both have been recorded.)



The full title of the first is, in translation, "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." It is a solemn, striking composition for large orchestra, made, like most of Penderecki's music, not of notes but of sounds—of evocative sonorities and timbres carefully laid out in time. Twelve ocarinas are used. "No composers," said Grove, "take the instrument seriously, or write music for a consort of ocarinas," but now Penderecki has done so. The soft, steady, pure, yet mysteriously undefined whistle of the ocarina duodecet makes an apt musical symbol for awe. The piece opens with a sequence of full, heavy, but pianissimo brass chords. In the printed score, they carry no expression marks and look quite plain; it was interesting to hear the composer himself treat each of them expressively, with a soft attack, a swelling to mezzo forte, and then a dying away. The massed sliding up and down that begins later presumably represents Jacob's recalling his dream—angels of God ascending and descending a ladder from earth to Heaven.

The Magnificat was commissioned for the twelve-hundredth anniversary of Salzburg Cathedral and was first sung there during the 1974 Salzburg Festival. It is the 1966 "Luke Passion" mixture as before, except that drama is omitted and the gait is slower, more ceremonial. Again there are broad bands of background sound, gestures in the foreground, unisons that swell into clusters, common chords that thicken into dissonance, dense dissonances that clarify and resolve into triads or unisons, massed choral glissando that turns into caterwauling, massed sighs, whispers, and shouts. Rolling round a huge, resonant cathedral, and colored by a historical imagination roaming the centuries, the work would probably be very impressive; in the concert hall I began to get the fidgets before the forty-five minutes it lasts were done. The effect is of fluent and by now familiar formula, applicable to any pious text—of generalized impressiveness in an all-purpose vanguard idiom. Penderecki's Magnificat is not a joyful song. Its most memorable episode is the bass solo insisting sternly that "he hath showed strength"—"*potentiam, potentiam, potentiam*"—"with his arm."

The program was completed by the Capriccio for Violin and Orchestra (1967), a compendium of fashionable orchestral effects, in which Syoko Aki was a brilliant soloist, and "Polymorphia" (1961), for forty-eight strings, whose score is made largely of encephalographs of mental patients recorded while they listened to Penderecki's earlier composition "Threnody," and rounded off by a chord of C major. In this score, the duration of each "sound event" is measured out in seconds, but when the composer conducted his own piece he did not seem to be counting, and interpreted his own notation very freely. Maybe he has changed his mind about relative durations. But the result was to confirm any suspicions of a free, throwing-things-together method of composition, aiming at a general effect in which the details need not be precise. Pictures have been painted, sculptures assembled, dramas staged, and ballets choreographed in a similar way. Penderecki is a talented and imaginative musician, challenging to perform, and very easy to listen to. But there are few Penderecki compositions I find worth hearing more than once or twice.

IAN STRASFOGEL's New Opera Theatre, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, began operations last month by staging a triple bill of music mostly not intended for dramatic representation. That "mostly" allows for the two exceptions: Monteverdi's "Lamento della Ninfa" and his "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda," which appeared in the Eighth Book of Madrigals as works "*in genere rappresentativo*"—dramatic episodes to insert into an evening of madrigals "*senza gesto*." (How the "Lamento" might be staged is a puzzle; "Tancredi" has both rudimentary stage directions and vivid cues for action in the music itself.) These formed the last two numbers of a Monteverdi anthology assembled under the title "Guerramore" and sung by four singers in costume, *con gesto*. Then came Leoš Janáček's song cycle "The Diary of One Who Disappeared." A "scenic" presentation of the cycle was given, in Ljubljana, as early as 1926, but it gains as little—and loses as much—by staging as "Die Schöne Müllerin" would. The third item was György Ligeti's "Aventures" and "Nouvelles Aventures"—nonsense music for vocal trio and instrumental ensemble, written for concert use but quite often treated as full-blown music theatre.

There was no skimping. A Baroque ensemble had been engaged for the Monteverdi, and the Speculum Musicae, under David Gilbert, for the Ligeti. There was no doubling of roles, except for the distant trio of women's voices in the Janáček; that was sung by principals of the two other pieces. Karl Eigsti's décors made the Lepercq Space of the Academy look good. (Even without décor, it is one of New York's most congenial performance places.) But there was nothing quite first-rate, except Ursula Oppens' playing of the piano part in the "Diary," and Susan Kay Peterson and Phyllis Hunter as the soprano and mezzo of the "Aventures." New York needs a small, lively, adventurous opera company; I hope I can report with enthusiasm on the next production, due in May.

JOAN MORRIS is just about my favorite American singer—the one whose records I play and play and play again. Sometimes when I've been grumbling on about a recitalist who doesn't bring the words to life, who sings without rubato, straitjacketing a text and its sense to the written values of the notes, who thinks more about rounded tone production than about expressive timbres, I'm asked, "Well, who does get everything right?" From recorded history, it's easy to answer: Adelina Patti, Alma Gluck, John McCormack, Conchita Supervia, Elisabeth Schumann are among the first names that come to mind. "But they're all dead; is it a lost art?" "No, there's Joan Morris; listen to two Nonesuch records she's made—'After the Ball' and 'Vaudeville.' They show exactly what I have in mind, what I've been missing."

This month, Miss Morris, with her husband and regular pianist, William Bolcom, gave a song recital in Alice Tully Hall; and Miss Morris in life is even more delightful than on disc. The voice is small; I had wondered whether it might be lost in that large, unresonant hall, which only a full orchestra can set ringing. In fact, it carried beautifully, for Miss Morris's projection is precise,

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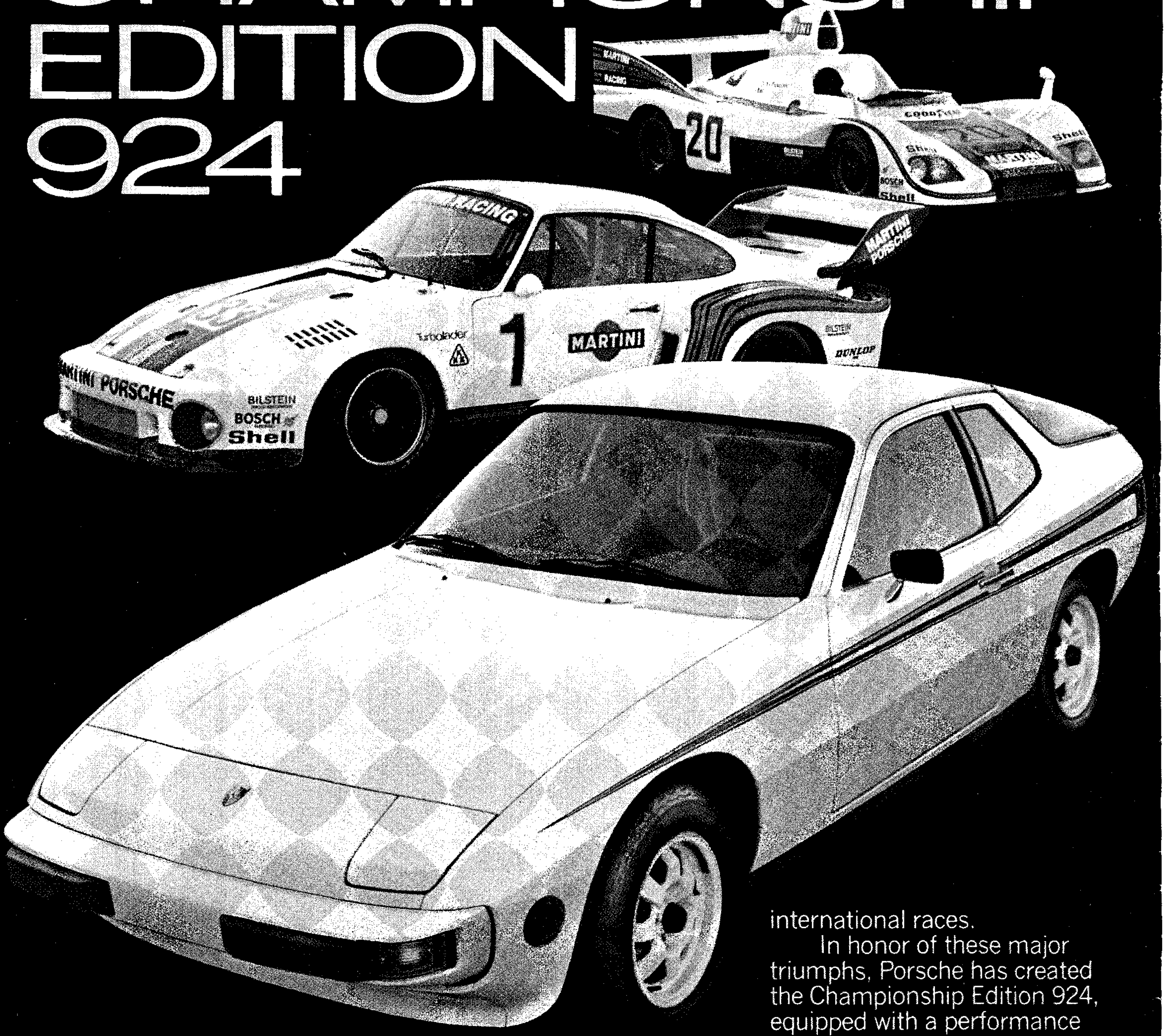
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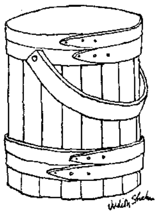
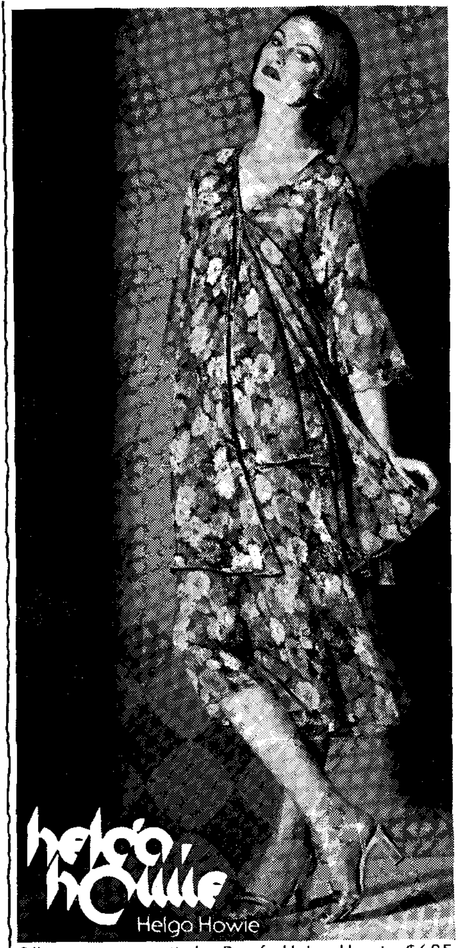
her tone pure, and her intonation true. A sparkle like Alma Gluck's can enter the sound (it did so at the words "the sun came shining down," in Harry Von Tilzer's "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie"). Basically the tone is sweet, limpid, and tender; in Sir Henry Bishop's "Home, Sweet Home" it was exquisite. She can warm it for the sentiment of Paul Dresser's "On the Banks of the Wabash," bleach it for the understated tragedy of Richard Rodgers' "Ten Cents a Dance," thicken it for the music-hall gusto of Henry Pether's "Waiting at the Church." She can bubble. She can sing risqué songs, such as Eubie Blake's "My Handy Man Ain't Handy No More," with a choirboy innocence that removes any taint of vulgarity but loses none of the humor. She knows when to join notes and when to separate them. She makes Charles Harris's "After the Ball" as moving as "Der Leiermann." She has the true lieder singer's genius for creating scene, character, and emotion with small, vivid, perfectly scaled strokes. There are records—Supervia's of Bizet's "Adieux de l'Hôtesse Arabe" is one—that it is hard to play through just once; something about them demands an immediate encore. Many of the tracks on Miss Morris's two Nonesuch L.P.s have this quality; her coloring or placing of a particular word is so enchanting that one needs to hear it again at once. Walter Legge set Elisabeth Schwarzkopf to study the single word "Bada" as it is sung by Nellie Melba on her disc of Mimi's Farewell. There is something in the way Miss Morris enunciates the single word "oh" in John Flynn's "Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay," the word "elephants" in Rosamond Johnson's "Under the Bamboo Tree," and the words "Fifth Avenue" in Alfred Solman's "The Bird on Nellie's Hat" which is magical. If I taught a lieder class, I would set it to study Miss Morris's and Mr. Bolcom's command of tempo and rubato in those songs, in James Thornton's "When You Were Sweet Sixteen," and in Johnson's "My Castle on the Nile." Anyone who can manage "The Bird on Nellie's Hat" as she does should have no difficulty with the "Erlkönig." Copying—whether of pictures, compositions, or interpretations—is a good way of learning, a first step toward the acquiring of techniques that any artist of personality then uses for individual purposes. When Miss Morris sings songs associated with Adelina Patti, Blanche Ring, Ruth Etting, or Peggy Lee, she makes them all her own. She is a complete artist, and I hope one day to hear her sing Schubert, Loewe, Wolf, and Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire"—in English translation, of course. Mr. Bolcom, with his rare command of rhythm, of textures, and of wide dynamics that support yet never drown the singer, is her ideal partner; his playing is at once witty, buoyant, and poetic.



Earlier this season, Jan DeGaetani gave three recitals in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium of the Metropolitan Museum. The second of them included Schoenberg's "Buch der Hängenden Gärten." The program book had been slipped with a text of Stefan George's poems and an English translation, but the lights in the hall were turned out. As Miss DeGaetani took her place for the cycle, there was a cry from the darkness, Let there be light. And there was light, and it was good. But when the singer saw the light, she remarked, not altogether graciously, "Now that you can see the words, I hope you enjoy them." She herself did not make the words very enjoyable. She is an artist who works with sounds, timbres, and phrases, with melodies but not with words—an exquisite and precious musician who does very beautiful and expressive things with her voice, "playing" on it like an instrumental virtuoso. Of vocal writing by George Crumb, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Jacob Druckman she is an incomparable interpreter. But Crumb's "Madrigals" (the third book of which she sang at this recital), Davies' "Stone Litany" (which she sang so memorably at the Celebration of Contemporary Music festival a year ago), and Druckman's "Animus II" (which she sang at the third Metropolitan recital, and has recorded for CRI) do not employ words in any traditional way. The Crumb is based on fragments of Lorca—brief, vivid images that one can scan quickly in the program and remember during the songs. The Davies text, transcribed from stone-carved runes, is in Orkney Norn, an Old Norse dialect, and, in the composer's words, "the voice part can be regarded as a coloured vocalise." The Druckman "text" is made of alluring noises notated in phonetic symbols. In all three compositions, the voice is one strand in an instrumental ensemble. And no one can color a vocalise so expressively as Miss DeGaetani or put so much "meaning" into the sheer sound of a vocal line. With the arabesques of four old Sephardic songs, at this recital, she ravished the ear. But when she turns to Schubert (which she has re-



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corded on a Nonesuch disc, along with "Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten") and Schoenberg, to Stephen Foster and Charles Ives (which she sang at the recital, and has recorded for Nonesuch), she is disappointing. The sounds are still beautiful, but the poetry does not come to life.

Crumb's third and fourth books of "Madrigals" are dedicated to Elizabeth Suderburg, who has recorded them, along with Books I and II, for Turnabout. She sings them well but without the special enchantment that Miss DeGaetani brings to them. Mrs. Suderburg gave an Alice Tully Hall recital in January, all of Bartók: the Opus 15 and Opus 16 songs, the "Village Scenes," and the set of Hungarian Folk Songs (1907-17)—a program that, with the same pianist, Béla Siki, she had already recorded on a Turnabout disc. The ten songs that make up Opus 15 and Opus 16—composed in 1916, and Bartók's only mature "art songs"—are difficult on many counts. The vocal demands are extravagant, both in terms of range and expression and on the singer's pitching; through Expressionist harmonies the voice often clashes with the piano. Hungarian prosody, it seems, resists a singing translation into any Indo-European language, and so direct experience of the songs is possible only to Hungarian-speakers. In straight translation, the poems seem rather awful. Mrs. Suderburg, who has a clear and well-schooled soprano, sang the music securely. I cannot comment on her command of the Hungarian. She showed an admirable reluctance to force her voice beyond its natural scale, but this meant that Bartók's big, passionate climaxes did not ring out. Without the text leaflet, no one could have guessed that the calm, composed recitalist was saying, "Kissing! My lips cry out for a kiss! My blood is a river of fire tonight, In a passion I fling open my naked arms, The coverlet falls away from my body. On the night of such a ripened lust, It were well to be kissing, embracing." But Mr. Siki's contribution was passionate. His playing has always united crispness and lyricism, elegance and emotion. It was good to hear him again, and in such good form.

SOME three years ago, when I encountered "Louise" for the first time, I thought it an opera that no serious house would dream of reviving. Yet here it is back at the State Theatre, with Beverly Sills as its heroine and Julius Rudel in the double role of director and conductor. Charpentier to

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my generation meant Marc-Antoine (1634-1704), the composer of “Médée,” not Gustave (1860-1956), the composer of “Louise.” And “Louise” meant one aria, “Depuis le jour,” recorded by sopranos from Mary Garden and Melba to Callas and Caballé, and otherwise a title that was important in operatic history because the piece chalked up its hundredth, five-hundredth, and thousandth performance at the Opéra-Comique in record time. The only recording available, with Ninon Vallin and Georges Thill, was old and heavily abridged; the composer even in his ninety-fifth year was reported to be sticking out tenaciously for higher terms than any record company was prepared to offer for a modern, complete version. But the story was familiar from Kobbé and from Abel Gance’s 1938 movie, which is a film of the libretto without the singing, though Grace Moore and Thill play the leading roles. It told of a Parisian seamstress who prefers free love with a poet to a decent life with her industrious, God-fearing parents. “Louise,” subtitled “a musical novel,” was celebrated in its day (1900) as the last word in verismo. There is a little orchestral interlude that accompanies the drinking of soup. Act I ends with the heroine reading the newspaper aloud to her father. Where Wagner began a scene with the “*Summ und Brumm*” of spinning wheels, Charpentier began one with the clickety-clack of sewing machines, notated in 6/8.

But when at last I saw “Louise,” in a spectacular student production at the London Opera Centre, it seemed to be quite a different sort of opera from what one had been led to believe—to be not verismo but a full-blown example of Symbolist art. The stage was a glittering symbolical representation of Paris, dominated by the Klingsor figure of the Noctambule (“Je suis le Plaisir de Paris!”). The audience sat only in the balcony; the orchestra was out of sight below, and the main theatre floor was bare. Onto it the realistic scenes—the Montmartre garret, the sewing shop, the lovers’ garden—were trucked out on large floats, from below the balcony, to meet the allurements and menace of the mingled Paradise and Inferno that made up this Paris. The Montmartre carnival advanced through the proscenium to swallow up Louise and Julien and fill all the acting space. The director brought out links with “Parsifal,” and stressed the piquancy of up-to-date props against Charpentier’s pretentious, mystical background. Stage directions such

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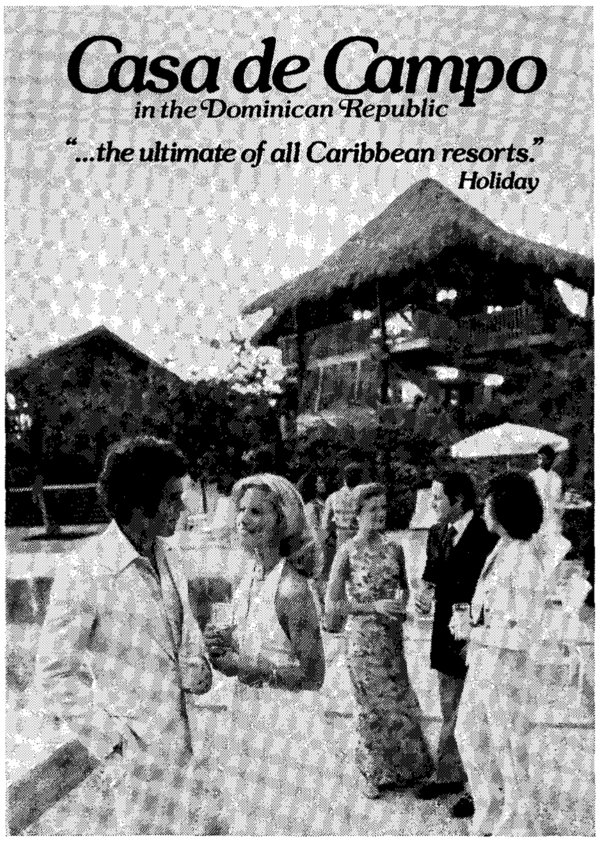
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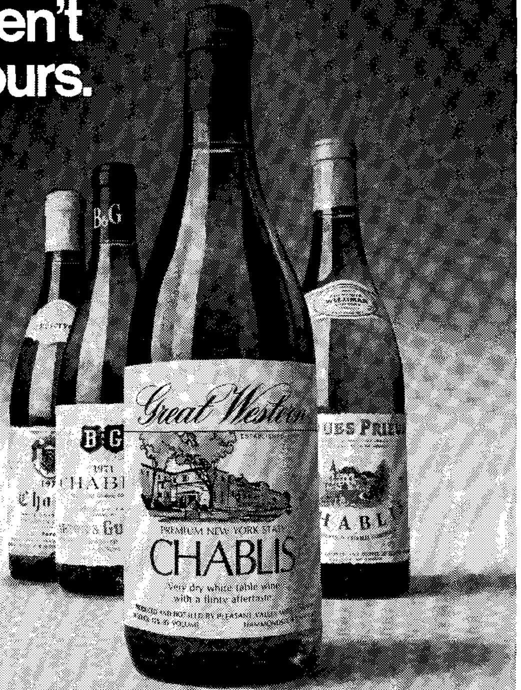

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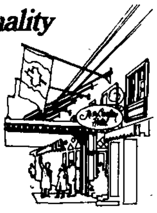

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as "*Dans une apothéose de lumière, Paris semble fêter les amants*" and "*Louise s'est transfigurée; elle écoute avidement les voix de son désir auxquelles la Ville de Plaisir semble répondre*" provided the general tone of the production.

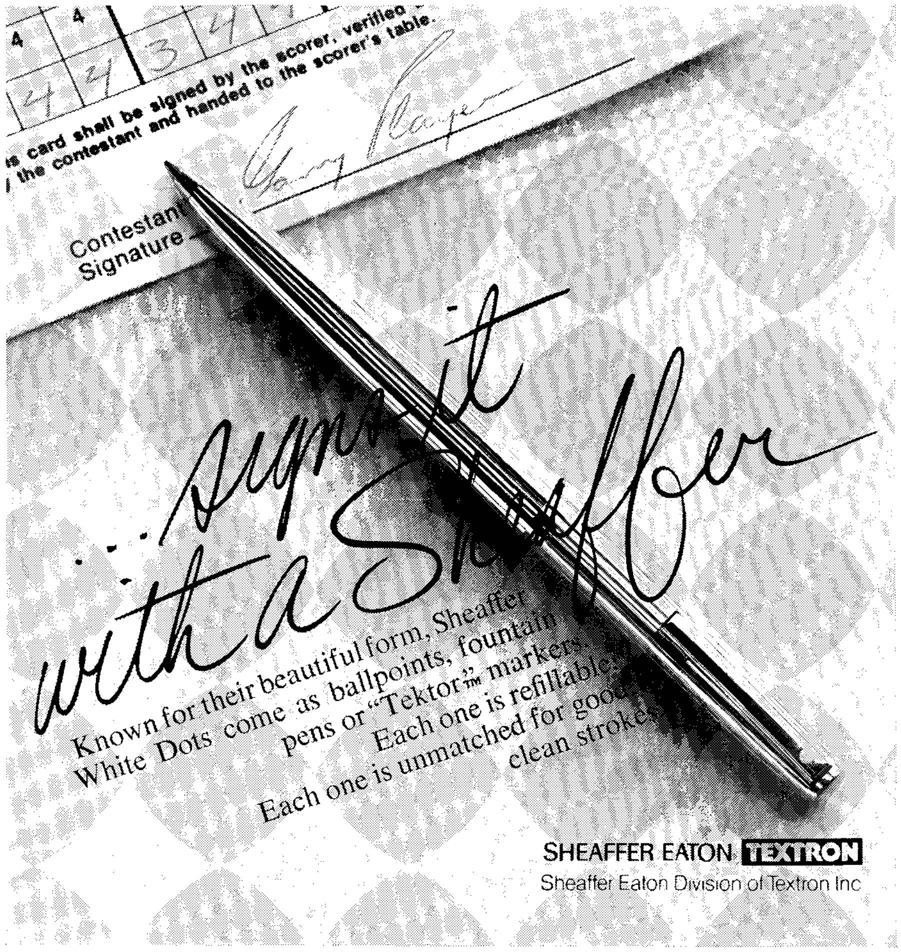
As a rule, I believe operas are best performed in the way their creators intended them to be done. There is a move-by-move, thought-by-thought, bar-by-bar production book for "Otello" which represents the opera Verdi wrote far more closely than any actual production of it I have ever seen. It provides for the staging what the score does for the singing, and to observe it should be no more "inhibiting" to artists than it is to observe the composer's musical notes. The rule is often broken by directors who think that they know better than a creator or who have not bothered to discover what he had in mind. It is broken with impunity only by those few who really do know better—or, on occasion, when a creator's flawed execution needs mending, when the original text is in doubt, or when the work in question scarcely merits serious handling anyway. "The Tales of Hoffmann," for example, has always seemed to me fair game for an inventive director's fancies. (That view may have to be modified once Fritz Oeser's reconstruction of Offenbach's original—it had its première at the Vienna Volksoper last December—becomes available for study.) And although there exist very precise instructions for the staging of "Louise" (Sarah Caldwell, I am told, drew on them for her 1971 production of the opera, in Boston), one could hardly mind that they were ignored in the London version. "Louise" is not a work that needs to be treated as scrupulously as "The Ring," "Otello," or "The Barber of Seville." The music does not bear much listening to in its own right. The drama does not stand up to scrutiny. But the multitude of roles does make the piece an attractive proposition for opera schools, and the staging described above provided an attractive, entertaining show. I wondered whether a realistic "Louise" might not prove mawkish.

The City Opera "Louise," staged in a refurbishing of the scenery for its 1962 production, is not altogether realistic. In Act III, the lovers lie down to spoon on bare planks, carefully avoiding a strip of synthetic lawn that is waiting for them. In Act II, the sewing girls ignore the cries of the ragman, offering to buy, and then throw bundles of stuffs into a *poubelle*. The lighting, even when the action is set within one small room, is achieved by follow spots trailing round after the characters. But these seem to be miscalculations rather than planned touches of unreality. The basic style is of naturalistic acting within "painterly," not realistic, scenery. The sets are made to look like enlarged pictures of Paris. (At the Opéra-Comique, when, after fifty years of hard service, the original production was replaced, Maurice Utrillo provided similarly painterly décor.) The designer, Gordon Micunis, has redone his Act III; the new panorama-of-Paris backdrop, well executed, cunningly catches the effect of evening light on the Seine.

Charpentier's first Louise, Marthe Rioton, was fresh from the Conservatoire. His second, a young Mary Garden, had never been on a stage before she stepped into Act III one night when Rioton was taken ill, and (as she relates in "I Start at the Top in Louise," a chapter of her lively autobiography) brought the house down with "Depuis le jour." The role calls for a candid, clear, fearless young soprano, and at the City Opera Miss Sills convincingly became one, singing and playing without artifice, directly, intently. There was some unsteadiness on sustained notes, but there were also many pretty phrases, and a touchingly romantic, girlish manner that seemed natural, not assumed. John Alexander was a reliable but unromantic Julien. Frances Bible was an impressive Mother. Robert Hale sang the Father's music very clearly. Charpentier had a gift for musical scene painting, also shown in his early "Impressions d'Italie." At the New York première of "Louise," in 1908, the dawn scene of Parisian street life was, according to H. E. Krehbiel, simply eliminated, "with much else of the local color rubbish." But Mr. Rudel showed it to contain some of the best-written passages of the score, and its numerous small roles were ably taken. It was a mistake to try to sing the opera in French instead of in English translation; many theatrically important lines—the street urchin's comments, the ragman's song at the end of Act III—were incomprehensible.

Paul Dukas, writing enthusiastically about "Louise" in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, regretted its mystical passages and drew an interesting distinction between German music-drama, essentially a musical affair, and the French tradition of operatic music arising specifically from the dramatic action. But he also had some questions to ask about this particular action: "Does M. Charpentier side with this Julien, so little concerned with the grief he is causing the parents of his beloved? Does he side with the father, so jealous of his daughter's honor? Does he side with the daughter, so avid for her freedom? One hardly knows." Much of the success of "Louise," I suspect, was due to the fact that everyone could find in it a moral to his or her liking. Pious parents deploring errant children and their talk of "*l'amour libre;*" rebellious children impatient with parental control; working girls dreaming of a Prince Charming who would sweep them away to happiness; feminists deploring that there was no other escape route from drudgery; social reformers deploring the system that made life, for people like Louise's parents, a narrow round of hard work, producing for others; conservatives hardened to the acceptance of such a system—all could read in "Louise" a confirmation of their beliefs and aspirations. Krehbiel, in 1911, reported with distaste that in Paris "funds are raised to send the working girls of the city to the opera in droves, there to hear the alluring call to harlotry, under the pretense that the agonies of the father will preach a moral lesson." "L'égoïsme appelle l'égoïsme!" Julien cries in Act III, correctly formulating the central dramatic situation. Charpentier does not take sides. Whether a composer should take sides is a question that can be argued. If opera is to be an instrument of social change, of course he should; if it is a mere diversion, it hardly matters. But even if we do not blame Charpentier for putting every point of view in turn, we can blame him for exploiting each sentiment for maximum titillation, like a sensational reporter. There is something unwholesome, something opportunist, about "Louise"—something Puccinian unredeemed by Puccini's musical genius. In his great book on French music, Martin Cooper put it roundly: Charpentier "had neither taste nor distinction." The final twist comes when the Father reveals the patently sexual basis of his paternal care. (At the State Theatre, Mr. Hale did not actually cuddle Miss Sills on his lap, as the stage directions require.) There are more worthy ways for Miss Sills, Mr. Rudel, and the City Opera to spend their—and our—time. (Mounting the other Charpentier's "Médée" could be one of them.) Nevertheless, Gustave Charpentier's "Louise" is part of operatic history, and I am glad to have seen it—once—in a traditional production.

—ANDREW PORTER



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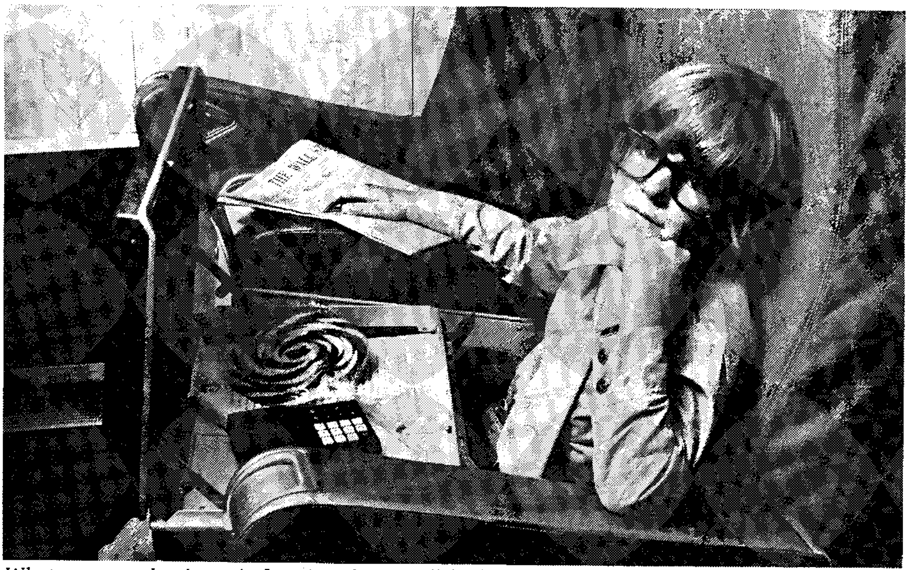
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BOOKS

The Heaven of an Old Home

THE city of Reading, in southeastern Pennsylvania, sits dreaming and declining in the center of a lozenge-shaped county of bosomy farmland, Berks. The city's silhouette, in the shadow of Mount Penn, is dominated by the eighteen-story courthouse that rose from the red-brick surround in 1932 and remains the tallest building in sight. Reading's population, once over a hundred thousand, has fallen in every census since 1930; its main stem, Penn Street, in my boyhood a thriving strip of stores and movie houses, sprouts like leaves of asphalt larger and larger parking lots in an attempt to lure shoppers back downtown. Pretzels and steel are still produced, but the Old Reading Brewery is gone, the old farmers' market is gone, the textile industry has long gone south, and the Reading Railroad, well known to players of Monopoly, has gone into the belly of Conrail. Even the Reading rackets, and the permissive officials that let them flourish, are no longer notorious. Yet the eating is still good, and the predominantly German-descended population shows a sedentary loyalty to this comfortable, good-humored place. The people are both conservative and fanciful; hex signs adorn the Berks barns, and a pagoda surprisingly perches atop Mount Penn. Reading's civic institutions—the hospitals and schools, libraries and fire stations—are well equipped, and through the hazy summers and slushy winters a sort of cultural fever persists. Music stores and craft shops abound. Most children absorb a quota of improving lessons. Artists, if not as high in the social scale as ophthalmologists and firemen, have a certain place. But in the years when I was growing up around Reading the name of Wallace Stevens was never heard, and I had to go away to Harvard to discover that one of America's premier modern poets had been born and raised in the heart of the city, on North Fifth Street.

Stevens, too, went to Harvard, and after leaving it in 1900 (without a degree) lived in New York and then in Hartford, first as a fledgling newspaperman, then as a law student, and finally as an executive for insurance companies. Resident in Hartford from 1916 to his death in 1955, he came to be as automatically identified with Connecticut as Robert Frost was with New Hampshire and Robinson Jeffers with the California coast. In the great and festive range of geographical references in his poetry, those to Berks County are perhaps pointedly few, and come in the later poems. Neversink, Schuylkill, Tulpehocken, and Oley appear in the collection "Transport to Summer" (1947), but emblematically, as sites in Stevens' mind:

> From a Schuylkill in mid-earth there came emerging
> Flotillas, willed and wanted, bearing in them
>
> Shadows of friends, of those he knew . . .

The Schuylkill, choked with coal silt in my day, did not even in Stevens' time bear flotillas of "canoes, a thousand thousand." Like his alter ego Crispin in "The Comedian as the Letter C," Stevens "Slid from his continent by slow recess/To things within his actual eye." His Nature, so often and ardently invoked, is generalized, Arcadian:

> Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
> Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
> Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness . . .

In the slow and careful making of himself as a poet (after college he did not publish any poems until he was thirty-five; his first collection, the revelatory "Harmonium," came out in 1923, when he was forty-four), Stevens had to put Reading far behind him, and he wrote, instead, of places—Florida, the Yucatán, an imagined Orient—where he had never, or passingly, been. Yet the Stevens family were solid Readingites; Wallace's father, Garrett, came there in 1870 to take up the law, and his two other sons, Garrett, Jr., and John, were practicing attorneys in Reading, as is John's son John now. Wallace lived in the same brick row house, 323 North Fifth Street, for his first eighteen years, and except for summer excursions spent all those formative years there. So Stevens' daughter Holly has performed a valuable as well as filial service by recounting and assembling what she can discover about her father before, as a rising business-

Handelsman

"I can't really tell you what business I'm in. I'm almost frighteningly diversified."

man and an immensely accomplished, if scarcely known, poet, he moved to Hartford; her dossier is titled "Souvenirs and Prophecies: The Young Wallace Stevens" (Knopf).

Miss Stevens has drawn upon three main types of document: the early poems by Stevens, of which the first extant was published in the Reading Boys' High School magazine in 1898; his journal, which he began at Harvard in 1898 and continued, with many intermittences and later excisions, until 1912; and his letters to Elsie Viola Kachel, who became his wife in 1909, after five years of courtship, though the earliest surviving item of his copious correspondence with her dates only from March of 1907. In addition to these sources, his daughter has drawn on family conversations and the rather meagre traces of himself that Stevens left in the archives of Reading, Cambridge, and New York. His high-school records were destroyed in a fire, he left Harvard (according to his friend Witter Bynner) under a cloud, and his legal career after his admission to the New York Bar in 1904 is dimly glimpsed indeed. Furthermore, his journals have been exasperatingly mutilated—possibly, Miss Stevens conjectures, by her mother, "if she found personal references she did not wish preserved." Mrs. Stevens was evidently no reverencer of her husband's testament: "While I was growing up my mother did not read my father's poems, and seemed to dislike the fact that his books were published." Her "regard for privacy" apparently led her to resent that a few poems originally written for her birthday were later made public in print. Elsie Stevens, whose personal beauty and musical aptitude inform so many of Stevens' verses, figures as a jarring note in her daughter's recollections:

> All her life, at least during the time I knew her, she suffered from a persecution complex which undoubtedly originated during her childhood, and which I was unable to understand for a long time. . . . We did not get on well together until after my father's death.

Even her devoted suitor noted in his journal, in 1907, "Elsie more or less unmanageable." If she was the unknown editor of these journals, who tore out pages at a time, would this reference have escaped her notice? My own pious hope is that the desecrater of so many irrecoverable passages was Stevens himself; it is a fact that he reread the journals and sometimes annotated them, and he may well have removed whatever he found embarrass-

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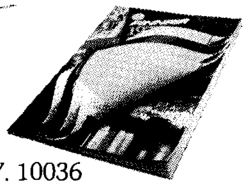

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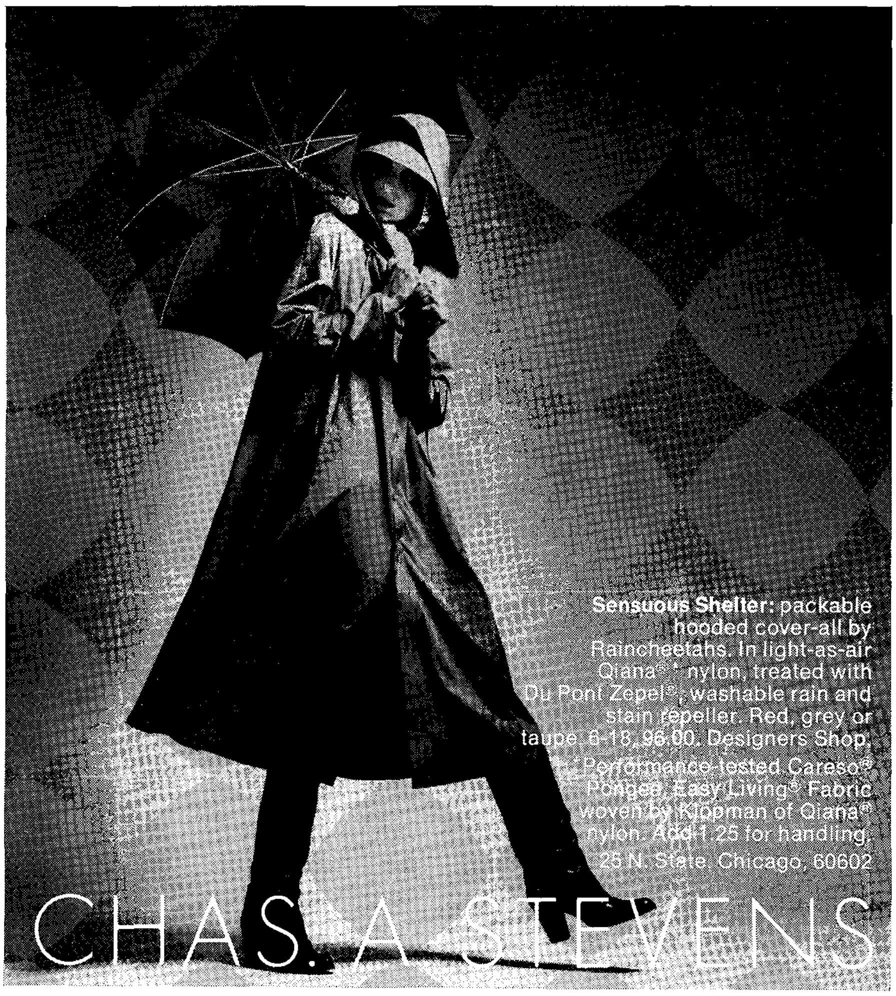

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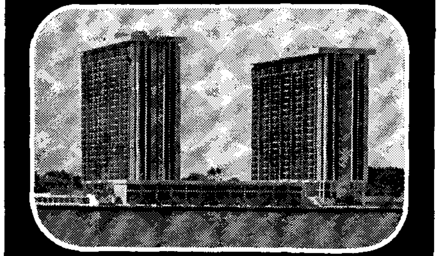

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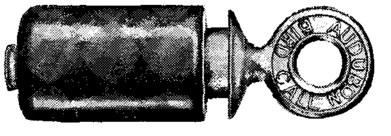

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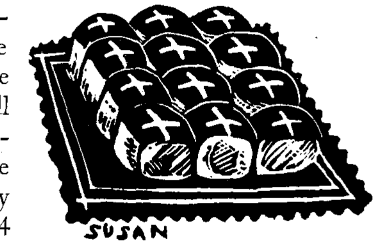
ing or jejune as ruthlessly as he edited the Pennsylvania provincial out of his own personality.

Stevens' references to Reading describe a curve in the records that remain. Coming home from Harvard for Christmas of 1898, he wrote in his journal, "The city was smoky and noisy but the country depths were prodigiously still . . . Coming home I saw the sun go down behind a veil of grime." The journal entries balloon when he is back in Berks: "Country sights both purge and fill up your fancy," he notes, and says, having described a raindrop slipping from leaf to leaf of a clematis vine, that "it was certainly a monstrous pleasure to be able to be specific about such a thing." Paragraphs are devoted to local botany and atmospheric effects; he ends one entry "Salut au Monde!" and another "The splendor is almost too great: things seem a little overdressed, a little overdone." When he has been living in New York a month, he expresses homesickness: "Whatever else I may be doing I never fail to think of the country about Reading. During August I hope to run over & see all the roads & hills again. Besides, they do not seem real to me unless I am there." Six months later, however, in 1901, he writes, "I have come to like New York heartily and sincerely. . . . I have about made up my mind never to settle down in Reading." With each visit home, the enchantment wears thinner: "Reading looked the acme of dullness & I was glad, therefore, to get back to this electric town which I adore." By 1902, he is philosophical about the provincial torpor: "Ran home a week ago. . . . Weather stupefied me. . . . Fate carves its images there in a tedious fashion, and neither beautifully nor well. And the very wings of Time hang limp in the still air. Alas! it did nothing but rain." More seasons pass, and by Thanksgiving of 1904 he is inditing, "In other respects, my visit was like many others. The family, to be candid, insuperably dull. The country incomparably duller." Yet, a sentence later, "On Sunday morning, I started on a bit of a walk. It had been snowing slightly and, far off, the fields were white. Beyond these stood the little blue hills, very pale in the light, very delicate." Back in New York, it is his habit to put himself to sleep by imagining himself "on a green mountain." From 1904 on, another tug back to Reading develops, in the form of Elsie: "On my way back I stopped at Reading and to my delight I found Elsie there. A way she had of taking my hand made me feel wonderfully welcome." Though his home town now affects him "like an elegant phase of paralysis" and "all the beautiful things in Reading wouldn't be enough to fill a trunk," the nymph of the place brings him back, with a rich mix of feelings:



> Reading got quite on my nerves. It is a terrible place except to the native. The country is adorable. . . . The bell at Spies church clattered as I passed. Looked out over Oley and went round the Lake of the Beautiful Lady and so—home. Elsie was in everything.

Elsie is very much a native. After their marriage, she often leaves their apartment on West Twenty-first Street and spends weeks at a time back in Reading, so that he must write and beg, "Come and give life to these quiet rooms and take care of me for a while." A letter of 1911 speaks severely: "Your dream of a home in Reading is most fanciful. . . . I fully intend to continue along my present line—because it gives me a living and because it seems to offer possibilities." His present line is never to take him back to Reading to live; but the town will come with him in the person of his bride, to whom he remained devoted, though she was, besides being beautiful, "delicate, fragile," and—the clear implication is—difficult. Lovingly he advises her in 1910, "We have more of life ahead of us than after. Therefore, cherish that old scene and those old thoughts. If I wanted to think all of life over, I think I could do it best up the Tulpehocken, or sitting on a fence along the Bernville road. . . . Native earth! That makes us giants." Within a few years, his father dies, then his mother, and then his family home is sold. In 1913, it is he who is in Reading briefly, and the final mention of the city in "Souvenirs and Prophecies" resolves the matter with a fine firmness. He will leave the place in fact, and hold it in his imagination. He writes Elsie:

> What strange places one wakes up in! Reading was very—unsympathetic, I thought. The trouble is that I keep looking at it as I used to know it. I do not see it as it is. I must adjust myself; because I do not intend to shut myself off from the heaven of an old home.

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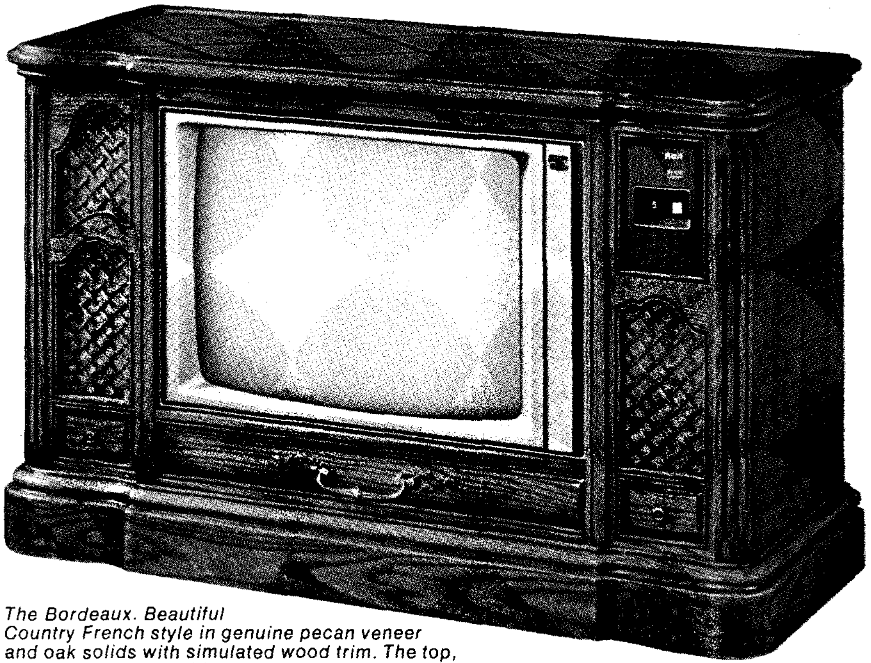

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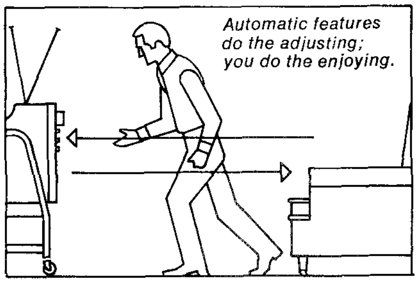

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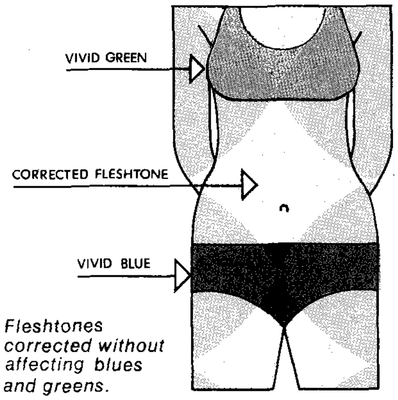

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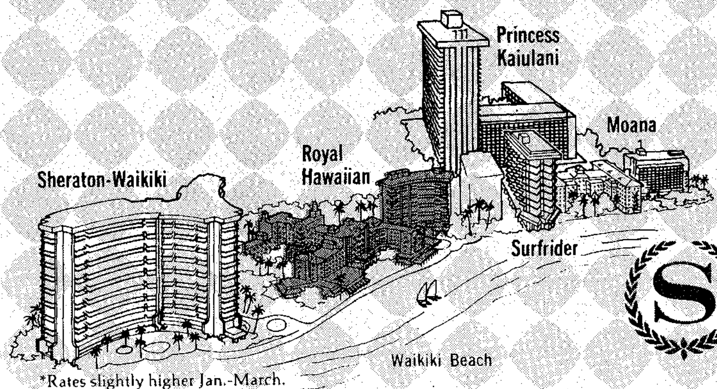

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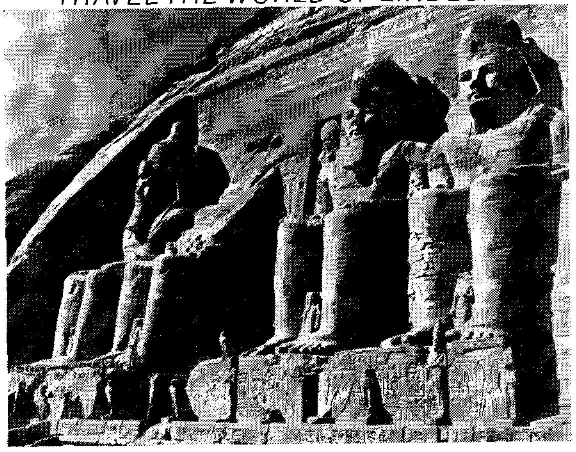
could have come from an earthy burg like Reading is a question that perhaps need not be asked. We cannot all be born in Cambridge or New York (though we can go there, as Stevens did), and these cultural centers cannot infallibly inspire their children with the enthusiasm and courage of creativity. Stevens' father was himself a poet, whose contributions appeared anonymously in the local newspapers. A year before his death, Stevens remembered life at 323 North Fifth Street thus: "We were all great readers, and the old man used to delight in retiring to the room called the library on a Sunday afternoon to read a five- or six-hundred page novel." This pattern, Holly Stevens tells us, was re-created in Stevens' Hartford home, where she was the only child.

> The house was quiet and the world was
>   calm.
> The reader became the book; and
>   summer night
>
> Was like the conscious being of the book.
> The house was quiet and the world was
>   calm.

The educational opportunities in nineteenth-century Reading for a child of good family were far from negligible. Stevens attended a "private kindergarten run by a French lady," the first stage of his lifelong infatuation with the French language and Gallic thought. From his surroundings he imbibed German, too, and his poetry includes punning titles in both tongues: "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle," "Lebensweisheitspielerei." Before acquiring some Latin, Greek, and elements of rhetoric at Reading Boys' High School, Stevens attended Lutheran parochial schools, and to this religious background may be credited his endless willingness to consider things metaphysically; though his poems speak, with deliberation and pathos, of "a world without heaven to follow," their ruminations spin on a dualistic frame descended from the Christian dualism of body and spirit. That mind and matter were closeted together in one universe never seemed less than extraordinary to Stevens. Throughout his New York years, he attended churches, though on one occasion he jubilantly throws away his childhood Bible ("I hate the looks of a Bible. . . . I'm glad the silly thing is gone") and on another assures Elsie, "I am not pious. But churches are beautiful to see." "The peculiar life of Sundays" fascinated him, and more than one journal entry and letter are dated with the two words—"Sunday morning"—that were to title his most celebrated poem. At this youthful stage, at least, his journals show him attempting prayer, and he writes to



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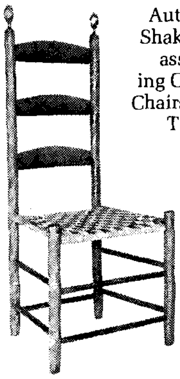

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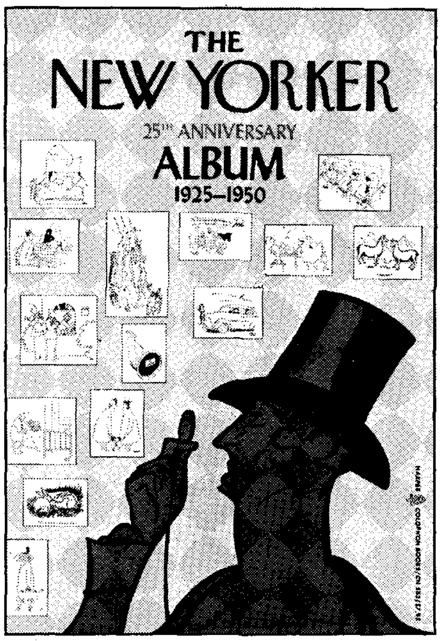

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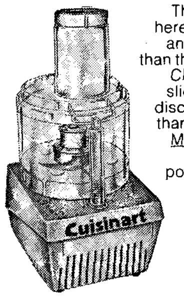

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Elsie, "People doubt the existence of Jesus . . . But I do not understand that they deny God." His mature opinions are unambiguously atheistical, yet he retained a religious disposition, which he put at the service of what he called poetry. In 1948, addressing students at Bard College, he spoke of the "poetic act" as becoming "engaged with something unreal," and gave as his first example "We do this sort of thing on a large scale when we go to church on Sunday." In 1940, a "Memorandum" on the "theory of poetry" states, "The major poetic idea in the world is and always has been the idea of God." In another address, he asserted, with a sincerity that lifts the idea above the banal, "In an age of disbelief . . . it is for the poet to supply the satisfactions of belief, in his measure and in his style." It is as if, in Stevens' mind, the idea of poetry were so sublime and vast that it and God merge, at that metaphysical level where unreality is no drawback. For, two of his "Adagia" state, "Reality is a vacuum" and "In the long run truth does not matter"—paradoxes with a hearty Kierkegaardian ring.

Nor did Berks County fail to provide, besides books, schools, churches, roads, and Nature in abundance, intellectual companionship for him. Edwin Bechtel, who went to high school with Stevens, remembered him as "a whimsical, unpredictable young enthusiast, who lampooned Dido's tear-stained adventures in the cave, or wrote enigmatic couplets to gazelles"—a startlingly accurate foretaste of the mature Stevens' tone. Though an erratic academic performer, Stevens won prizes for rhetoric and oratory, and over a decade later boasted to Elsie in a letter, "You know I took *all* the prizes at school!" Home from Harvard, he engaged in heady debates with Christopher Shearer, whose canvases of tangled woodland now adorn the Reading Museum:

> He said that after all nature was superior to art! . . . I said that the ideal was superior to fact since it was man creating & adding something to nature. He held however that facts were best since they were infinite while the ideal was rare.

Stevens never abandoned his championing of the ideal, and saw all phenomena under its guise, giving them a gemmy, mythy lustre. His abiding sense of the abstract plants "giants" in the air; with the ease of a primitive or a child he conjures intermediate presences, real clouds condensed from our mental activity. Almost at random, his poetry yields instances of this radically poetic habit of perception. "Contrary Theses (II)" begins,

One chemical afternoon in mid-autumn,
When the grand mechanics of earth and
　sky were near,

and goes on,

The abstract that he saw, like the
　locust-leaves, plainly:

The premiss from which all things were
　conclusions,
The noble, Alexandrine verve.

To this oddly palpable sense of the invisible add, as another genial aspect of Stevens' Lutheran heritage, the willingness to admit pleasure as an ethical and aesthetic checkpoint. The word recurs in his journals, from the "monstrous pleasure" quoted earlier to the thought that "one uses French for the pleasure that it gives," to the college notation of a suggestion by Plato's translator Jowett that "when we substitute a higher pleasure for a lower we raise men in the scale of existence," and, finally, to the complete credo he could set down as early as 1899:

> I thoroughly believe that at this very moment I get none of my chief pleasures except from what is unsullied. The love of beauty excludes evil. A moral life is simply a pure conscience: a physical, mental and ethical source of pleasure. At the same time it is an inhuman life to lead. It is a form of narrowness so far as companionship is concerned. One *must* make concessions to others; but there is never a necessity of smutching inner purity. The only practical life of the world, as a man of the world, not as a University Professor, a Retired Farmer or Citizen, a Philanthropist, a Preacher, a Poet or the like, but as a bustling merchant, a money-making lawyer, a soldier, a politician is to be if unavoidable a pseudo-villain in the drama, a decent person in private life.

So the decision, if untested, has already been made—to live dualistically, as a "pseudo-villain," a "money-making lawyer" who is also "a decent person in private life." *The love of beauty excludes evil:* the word "beauty" completes the old-fashioned trilogy—ideal, pleasure, beauty—by which Stevens lived and concocted his astonishingly supple and prolific verbal world. The career choices had already been spelled out by his father in a letter written earlier to Harvard: "For life is either a pastoral dream—the ideal of the tramp, or superannuated village farmer—Or it is the wild hurly burly activity of the fellows who make the world richer and better by their being in it."

The natural landscape of Berks County, it may be not too fanciful to say, looks nurtured and used and, if not Arcadian, rather European to American eyes. The sky seldom lacks clouds, and the hills, with their shaggy crowns, do seem subdued giants. The frontier feels even more remote here than in New England, where an underlying austerity remembers it. Reading, its natives know, is a civilized place. Laid out on tidy English principles by Thomas Penn, the first center of the American steel industry, populated by skilled craftsmen, and combining, in the words of the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, "unusual business and industrial advantages" with a situation in a "rich agricultural region," Reading had in the years when Stevens knew it best a proud sense of itself as a *place*. Stevens knew himself as a man of places: "Life is an affair of people not of places. But for me life is an affair of places and that is the trouble." In addition to the solid "Dutch" physiognomy pictured on the dust jackets, his "native earth" endowed Stevens with a human nature that was robust, patient, loyal, and humorous. How much patience he needed to bring his gifts to fruition can be seen from the juvenilia that his daughter here collects and publishes. His verse remained juvenile into his thirties. Though there are flashes of characteristic color in some of his undergraduate poems—

> for in the fern I saw the sun
> Take fire against the dew; the lily white
> Was soft and deep at morn; the rosary
> Streamed forth a wild perfume into the light—

the sentiments are Henleyesque and the metrics jingling; in New York he adds some fashionable *chinoiserie* to Elsie's birthday bouquets but retains the incubus of rhyme to the verge of his coming of artistic age, which seems to date (as did Proust's) from his mother's death, in 1912. He wrote to Elsie in 1911, "I am far from being a genius—and must rely on hard and faithful work." This seems modest; but he was certainly far from precocious. His *Harvard Advocate* contributions, though they conscientiously manipulate the glossy counters of late-Victorian poetry, in no way advance the game; whereas, ten years later, T.S. Eliot, having discovered Laforgue and Dante for himself, was contributing to the *Advocate* poems ("Nocturne," "Spleen") that are well on the way to "Prufrock." Yet though Stevens was slow to find his voice, slow to make his first collection, and even slower to make his second ("Ideas of Order," in 1936), he lived long enough to accommodate these hesitations within an ample oeuvre, of expanding fluency; his joyous late variations on mastered themes remind us of Bach. He played

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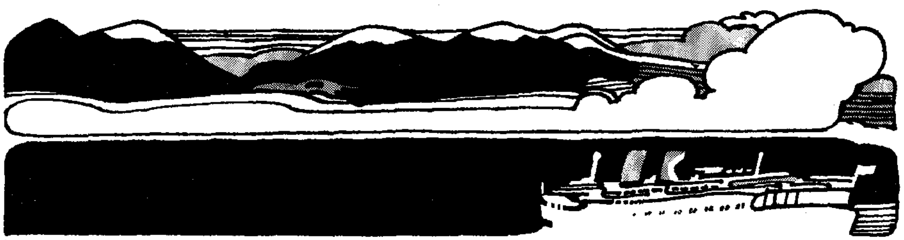

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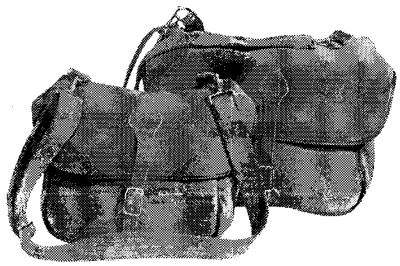

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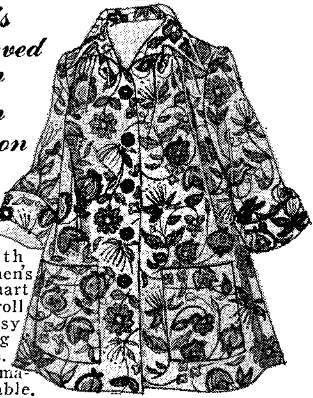

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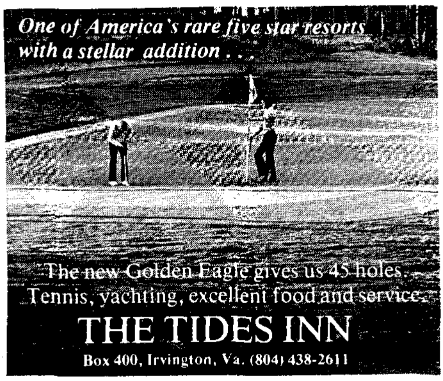

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on and on, and in the end won all the prizes. His personal robustness found early expression in boyhood athletics and pranks. "I was distinctly a rowdy," he tells Elsie in a letter. In young manhood, he flung himself into thirty-mile walks along the dusty, pre-automobile roads of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. Joined to his reflective, deliberate, cold side there was something combative and uproarious, which expressed itself in contention with distance and weather. In 1908, describing to Elsie a walk to Grant's Tomb on a winter day, he writes, "It was beastly cold—my hands were swollen with it. But the air poured into us like light into darkness." The image is pure Plato, and pure lust, of a sort. Stevens comes at us, in the mature poems, tumbling, full of foolery, veering from decorum with outrageous titles ("No Possum, No Sop, No Taters," "So-and-So Reclining on Her Couch," "A Weak Mind in the Mountains," "Saint John and the Back-Ache," etc.) and in the animal noises and nonsense syllables so surprising amid the splendors of his vocabulary:

> Poet, be seated at the piano.
> Play the present, its hoo-hoo-hoo,
> Its shoo-shoo-shoo, its ric-a-nic,
> Its envious cachinnation.

Stevens was called Pat in Reading and Pete at Harvard and was so full of fun that, among other escapades, he was accused, while "fairly lit," in his last year of college, of "announcing jovially that he was going to rape" a waitress; indeed, he did topple her to the floor. On the next page of "Souvenirs and Prophecies" we read that also before leaving Harvard he spent an evening with George Santayana, discussing their poetic ambitions on what seem to have been terms of equality. He wrote a poem to Santayana fifty years later, and remained always loyal to the philosopher's quest for—in a phrase from the poem—"the celestial possible." Stevens evinced loyalty to many things—to his wife, though even at the outset she appeared "more or less unmanageable," and to the Hartford Accident & Indemnity Company, for which he labored nearly forty years, well past the age of retirement. The steadfastness of his preoccupations is demonstrated by the frequency with which journal entries of his youth are echoed in poems decades later. Like a Pennsylvania farmer, he occupied his acreage and worked it. As Whitman's poetic activity was a continuous revision and expansion of "Leaves of Grass," so it almost was with Stevens and "Harmonium"—his proposed title for the collected

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poems was "The Whole of Harmonium." Above all, he was loyal to the inviolate conception of literature he formed before this century began: "Is literature really a profession? Can you single it out, or must you let it decide in you for itself? I have determined upon one thing, and that is not to *try* to suit anybody except myself."

His daughter has shown loyalty in turn by becoming her father's editor. This is the third volume that she has seen into the press; the two others are the "Letters of Wallace Stevens" (1966) and the paperback anthology "The Palm at the End of the Mind" (1972). She brings to her custodianship a love and care more than scholarly, and in this instance has had to invent a way of presenting her variegated, fragmented material. "Souvenirs and Prophecies" is an unusual book—"a singular collation," one might say, quoting the line after the line in "The Comedian as the Letter C" from which the title is taken:

He, therefore, wrote his prolegomena,
And, being full of the caprice, inscribed
Commingled souvenirs and prophecies.
He made a singular collation.

Neither biography nor anthology, this volume—uniform with Knopf's handsome editions of Stevens, and a balancing opposite to "Opus Posthumous," edited by Samuel French Morse—essentially binds together Stevens' pre-1915 poems, all of the journals that survived the mysterious slashing they received, the bulk of Stevens' letters to his wife prior to their move to Hartford, a little of his undergraduate and journalistic prose, and such biographical facts and conjectures as were deemed helpful. In these last two categories, we wish for more. Stevens' prose firmed up long before his poetry, and we might have liked to read, from the *Advocate*, the "rather eerie story of a young man who takes a photograph of his sweetheart to be framed; after it is done and he opens the package, he finds a picture of himself," or, from the *Tribune*, the story composed, according to William Carlos Williams, in this manner: "Stevens sitting on a park bench at the Battery watching the out tide and thinking to join it as a corpse . . . As he sat there watching the debris floating past him he began to write—noting the various articles as they passed." His long New York period is tantalizing in the glimpses afforded, and one wonders if Miss Stevens, with more interviews and research, might have filled in at least the years after 1909. Our impression of the years before that is simultaneously of Stevens' immense capacity to suffer

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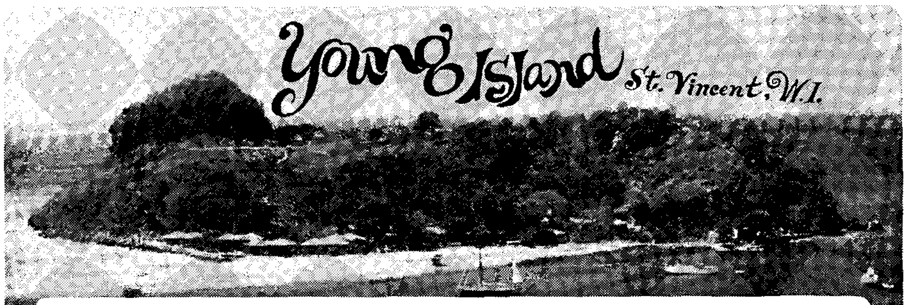

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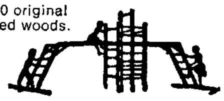

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solitude and of the energy of his gallivanting, his theatre- and concert-going. We are gratified to learn, for instance, that he attended Stephen Crane's funeral service at a Seventh Avenue church (and found it an "absolutely common-place, bare, silly service") the same year—1900—that he attended a performance by Sarah Bernhardt of "Hamlet" in French (and was shocked by her rude treatment of Polonius). Of the seven years of Stevens' married life in the city, his daughter, who was not born until 1924, confesses an ignorance that she has done little to relieve. She has talked to one person who visited her parents' New York apartment; this guest noticed only "that it was rather sparsely furnished, and that the evening she was there Wallace sat in a corner reading." But aren't these the years in which Elsie Stevens, whose cameo beauty was remembered by a friend as "very stiff, straight and stiff, like a gendarme almost," posed for the sculptor who designed the Liberty dime of 1916, so that her profile achieved wider currency than her husband's poems ever did? And didn't the Stevenses have any friends within the Village literary crowd? Wasn't he, by 1916, one of Harriet Monroe's favorite poets, and writing plays performed in New York theatres? But such questions trespass, perhaps, beyond the *terra incognita* for which Miss Stevens provides a welcome map, showing the road out of Reading, which on another plane was the road back. —JOHN UPDIKE

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

EVIDENCE OF LOVE, by Shirley Ann Grau (Knopf). The word "companionable" does not spring to mind frequently in connection with most current fiction, but it always does when one is reading the novels of Shirley Ann Grau. In this, her fifth novel, three people narrate the story of their lives: a licentious old millionaire, his stiff, prim son, and the son's thoughtful, reticent wife. The old man's tale, which begins in prosperous, upper-class Philadelphia in the eighteen-eighties, is one of boundless self-indulgence and pleasure-seeking, of four marriages and scores of affairs with members of both sexes, which have always left him bored. His son's story is that of a legitimized bastard who becomes a minister and semi-recluse, and who regards his father's morals with contempt. His daughter-in-law's story is that of an eager young woman from British East Africa whose first husband

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committed suicide, and who, until her last years, has always let others determine the course of her life. The least believable of the three voices is that of the son, who is a bit of a caricature of a super-rationalist—a man who is so devoid of feeling that he can even rationalize, on the grounds of truthfulness, telling the younger of his two sons that he likes the other better. But even he is sympathetic most of the time, because he explains himself so well. The story is carried along up to the present, and in the end the three stories meld satisfyingly into one.

THE STREET OF CROCODILES, by Bruno Schulz, translated from the Polish by Celina Wieniewska (Penguin). Thirteen loosely joined stories by a talented, reclusive Polish writer who supported himself as an arts-and-crafts instructor, and lived and died—the victim of a Gestapo bullet—in the small Galician town of Drogobych. Schulz, who was fifty when he died, was the son of Jakob Schulz, a bookkeeper and the owner of a drygoods store. His father, greatly mythologized and larger than life, is the central figure in these often grotesque fantasies about childhood. The world depicted is a small one. Its most extreme borders are the outskirts of town, and its epicenter is Jakob Schulz's home and its daily happenings—greatly transformed by the author's extraordinarily visual imagination. In one story, his father, who was an invalid for many years, is depicted as a mad demigod who lives in the family attic surrounded by rare, bizarre (live) birds. In another, a boyhood errand turns out to be an excursion into a dream world that seems to sum up all childhood dreams about getting lost. Schulz's imagination is so inward that it keeps the reader at a distance, but it leaves images in the mind (of dark streets, of patriarchal fury, of tense, closed-off rooms) that linger long afterward.

GENERAL

SNOWBLIND: A BRIEF CAREER IN THE COCAINE TRADE, by Robert Sabbag (Bobbs-Merrill). Zachary Swan (as he is known here)—wellborn, well educated, bright and imaginative—drifted in his swinging early forties from Madison Avenue into the profitable excitement of drug smuggling: first Mexican marijuana, and then, for two high-flying years, Colombian cocaine. His career ended in the fall of 1972 with his arrest at his beach house in Amagan-

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sett, Long Island, on charges of possessing both drugs and a pistol. Mr. Sabbag, a young journalist who seems to have met Swan while he was awaiting trial, clearly found him sympathetic, and the portrait he draws here is an attractive one: Swan is honest and honorable, loyal to his associates and protective of his employees. He is exhilarated by the wit-matching ingenuities necessary to get large quantities of drugs through customs, he has taste and humor, and he is convinced that (if you can afford its astronomical price) cocaine is relatively harmless. Mr. Sabbag has virtues of his own: he is a first-rate writer, he strikes exactly the right lightly sardonic tone, and he sees the netherworld he describes with neither horror or approval. It should be added that he, too, speaks cautiously well of cocaine, and with an impressive amount of pharmacological, neurological, and historical documentation. His book is a triumphant piece of reporting.

PRINCES AND ARTISTS: PATRONAGE AND IDEOLOGY AT FOUR HABSBURG COURTS (1517-1633), by Hugh Trevor-Roper (Harper & Row). The four courts were redoubtable ones—of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor; of his son, Philip II of Spain; of his grandson, Rudolf II, also Holy Roman Emperor; and of Albert and Isabella, who ruled the southern Netherlands as a fief of Spain. The artists who were patronized by these princes were no less redoubtable; they numbered in the hundreds, from all over the Continent, and at the top stood Titian, Dürer, El Greco, and Rubens. Mr. Trevor-Roper's spirited and penetrating discussion of the relationship between these royal patrons and the painters, architects, and sculptors they cajoled, seduced, and sometimes forced into their service, is not only an elegant historical reprise but is an inquiry into the very nature of art patronage in the High Renaissance. Mr. Trevor-Roper's answer, stripped to its bones, is that to these powerful men art had a larger function than it was to have in successive centuries: "It symbolized a whole view of life, of which politics were a part, and which the court . . . had a duty to advertise and sustain."

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There are few good women who do not tire of their role said la Rochefeucauld, whom we'd all quote more often if only we knew how to pronounce his name.—*Liz Smith in The News.*

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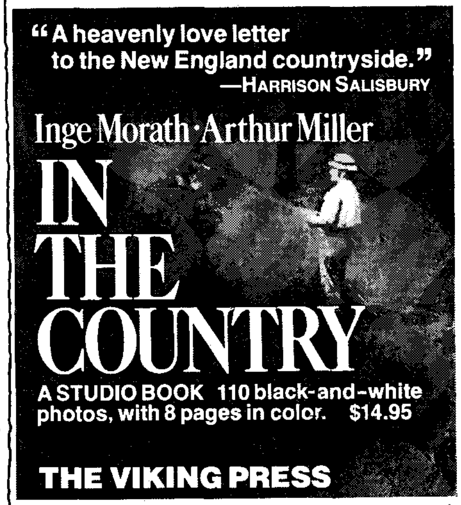
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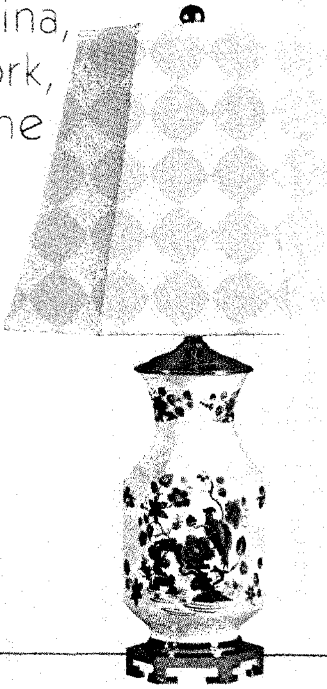

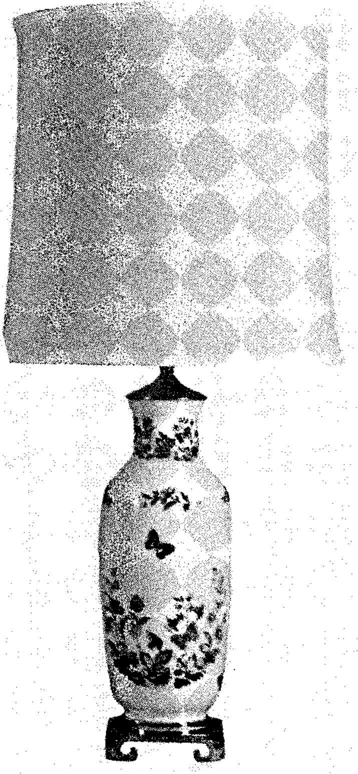

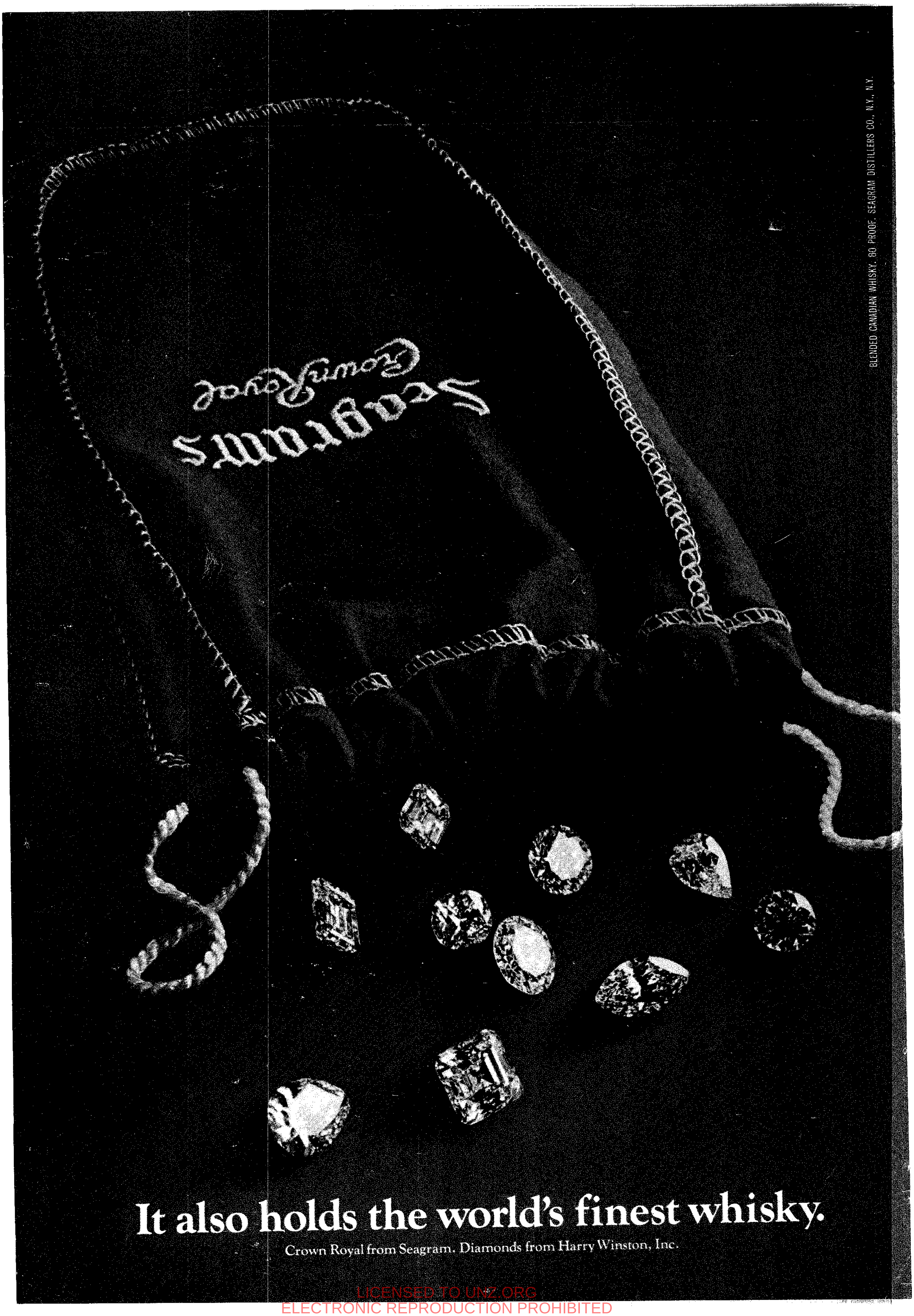
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